

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION IN AFRICA: 1908 - 1980

A CASE STUDY IN CHURCH GROWTH

IN A SEGREGATED SOCIETY

Ph.D Thesis

Submitted in Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

of the University of Cape Town

by

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June 1989

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa: 1908-1980 A Case Study in Church Growth in a Segregated Society.**

This case-study of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Africa in relation to Church Growth theory covers the period 1908 - 1980. Its geographical scope is South Africa, including the black Homelands.

In chapters 1 and 2 we examine the history, origins and development of the AFM in Africa in relation to Pentecostalism and the white AFM. In chapters 3 and 4 we research the contextual issues of racism, apartheid, and the relationship between the AFM, the State, and politics. From chapter 5 to the end our focus is on the church growth of the AFM in Africa.

Our study has shown that the AFM in Africa has grown significantly during the period studied. Significant growth factors have been: the prioritization of evangelism accompanied with an emphasis on the supernatural manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit; the active involvement of the laity; their theology of missions revealing a distinctive pneumatology, an eschatological urgency, and a sense of divine destiny; their ecclesiology; their culturally relevant liturgy; and homogeneous groupings

of Blacks. Conversely, factors hindering their growth have been the superpaternalistic approach to mission of the white "Mother-church". The endorsement of apartheid and lack of a prophetic witness of the Apostolic Faith Mission towards the State have also harmed their credibility in the black community.

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December 1989 (University of Cape Town)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that I wish to thank the following persons and institutions for the important part they played in helping me to complete this study.

The Apostolic Faith Mission that allowed me random access to their archival materials, and for their moral and financial support. A special word of appreciation to Pastors Joubert and Rudd who are responsible for the AFM Archive. To the Missions Director, Pastor Edgar Gschwend, missionaries and black pastors of the AFM in Africa for their trust and openness and warm cooperation. The AFM Casseldale and AFM Sasolburg South assemblies that I pastored while pursuing my studies, for their understanding.

I am privileged to have a friend like Phillip Kuypers who graciously supported us financially and helped to make this project possible.

To my wife, Tharien, and daughters, Lydia and Marelize, for their love and support and willingness to sacrifice.

I gratefully acknowledge the interest and encouragement of my supervisor, Prof. John W. de Gruchy. I found him to be an outstanding academician, but above all a person who loves

the Lord dearly and who has a great compassion for the Church in Southern Africa. To the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at Cape Town University, my sincere thanks for your hospitality.

Above all, I wish to thank the Lord of the Church, for His grace extended to me, who called me to be His servant and to whom I wish to remain faithful to the end.

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## INTRODUCTION

The scope of this study comprises a case-study of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Africa (AFM in Africa) in relation to Church Growth<sup>1</sup> theory, for the period 1908 to 1980. To clarify our terminology it needs to be mentioned that the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa consists of a white section which is regarded as the "Mother-church", and the black, coloured and Indian sections. If the abbreviation AFM is used, it is indicative of the AFM in South Africa and all four of its sections.<sup>2</sup> The black section is known as the AFM in Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Church Growth includes growth in breadth or numerically, growth in depth or qualitatively, and growth in

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup>Our sources sometimes use the abbreviation "AGS" (Apostoliese Geloofsending), which is the Afrikaans translation of "AFM".

<sup>3</sup>On July 13th, 1977 its name was changed from "Bantoekekerk" to the "AFM in Africa". The reader must not be misled by the AFM "in Africa", as the geographical scope of our study only includes South Africa. For all practical purposes, the church under discussion could be named AFM in Africa, in South Africa. Also important to note, is that, since the birth of the AFM in 1908, the AFM in Africa was ecclesiastically only regarded as a "section" of the AFM. Although they performed all the duties of a "church", this is still their legal status today.

visibility as "a sign of the new order of life introduced by Jesus Christ...".<sup>4</sup> Our main hypothesis, however, focuses upon the numerical growth or decline of the AFM in Africa and the factors that have caused it. Although the Apostolic Faith Mission is working in eighteen countries and claims to have 1602 assemblies,<sup>5</sup> the geographical scope of our study is only South Africa (including the Homelands).

In Chapter 1 to 2 we will show that the AFM in Africa is part of the modern day classical Pentecostal Movement. We will briefly look at the ecclesiastical, religious and social factors that contributed to the emergence of the Pentecostal Movement in general, as well as the preparatory factors for Pentecostalism in South Africa. Chapter 3 to 4 deal predominantly with the history of the AFM in Africa, from its inception in 1908 until 1980. The historical events will be described in chronological order as far as possible. The role of key individuals like John G. Lake, P.L. le Roux, Elias Letwaba, Richard Ngidi, Edgar Gschwend, and Frank Chikane, who influenced the AFM and the Church in general decisively, will be examined.

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<sup>4</sup>Costas, Orlando E.: The Integrity of Mission. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979, pp.37-38.

<sup>5</sup>Letter received from Missions Department, August 1988.

In Chapter 5 we will give a concise overview of the relationship between Pentecostalism and the Church Growth Movement, including a description of the major presuppositions of the Church Growth Movement. Chapter 6 will be a statistical excursus on the growth or decline of the AFM in Africa for the period 1908 -1980. In Chapter 7 we will critically examine and evaluate the growth or decline factors in the AFM in Africa in relation to Church Growth missiology. These factors will be examined under the categories, Contextual Factors, and Institutional Factors.<sup>6</sup>

In researching the AFM in Africa we had to rely primarily on archival material like, minutes, letters, magazines, notes, clippings, and mission reports of the white AFM. Unfortunately few congregational records, like minute books, exist for the AFM in Africa. Significant gaps exist in the archival documentation of the AFM in Africa. Interviews were held with numerous black pastors of the AFM in Africa.<sup>7</sup> To determine firsthand the views of black pastors in the AFM in Africa about various issues relevant

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<sup>6</sup>This is in line with the methodology of the Church Growth Movement. See:  
Wagner, C. Peter: Church Growth Principles and Procedures.  
Syllabus for course M660, Fuller Theological Seminary,  
Pasadena, Ca., 1981, p.10.

<sup>7</sup>Mostly they want to remain anonymous.

for our research, an opinion poll was held amongst them in 1983.<sup>8</sup>

While it should be the goal of a writer to be as objective as possible when interpreting history, the writing of value-free history is, in fact, not possible. In this regard it behoves me to spell out briefly the perspectives which influenced my objectivity. Firstly, I speak from a white Afrikaans-speaking, middle-class perspective. I am, therefore fully conscious of the fact that my interpretation might not necessarily represent the views of the black members of the AFM in Africa. Being a member of a privileged white socio-economic group in South Africa, prohibits one from experiencing history in the same manner as blacks. Even so, it is my intention to be as objective and sensitive as possible in dealing with the history of the AFM in Africa.

Secondly, I am a Pentecostal and thirdly, a member of the AFM. This means that I accept the truth claims of the Christian faith, and more especially, the particular interpretation of that tradition commonly held by Pentecostals. At the same time I have endeavoured to pursue my research according to accepted critical scholarship and its norms.

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<sup>8</sup>See Appendix 2.

## CHAPTER 1: THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT AND ITS PLANTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Unique ecclesiastical, religious and social factors have clearly contributed to the emergence of the Pentecostal Movement. These factors must be evaluated in a critical yet balanced manner because theories which set out to explain the origins of the Movement touch the very nature of Pentecostalism. Some historians, for example, focus their treatment on the socio-cultural context in which the Movement emerged, while others emphasize the divine element in the Movement, pointing to the sovereign work of God in connection with its origins.

Due to the incarnational nature of divine revelation Christian movements involve both a divine and human dimension. Men and women respond in faith in a variety of human circumstances, some of which are highly productive in heightening "expectant" faith. A fidelity must thus be shown toward both the divine and human dimensions in an effort to understand Pentecostalism in its own terms. That a holistic approach is necessary is illustrated by the historical accounts of two contemporary Europeans, Walter Hollenweger<sup>9</sup>, and Nils Bloch-Hoell<sup>10</sup>. From a Pentecostal

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<sup>9</sup>Hollenweger, Walter J.: The Pentecostals. Minneapolis,  
(Footnote Continued)



perspective both accounts represent unbalanced treatments with regard to the divine and human dimensions of causation and, therefore, represent distortions of the true nature of the Movement.

Pentecostal Paul Pomerville argues that Hollenweger's description of the Pentecostal Movement suggests a reductionistic tendency.<sup>11</sup> He emphasizes the human dimensions of the Movement to the extent that its divine nature is called into question. Saying that, "the origins of the Pentecostal Movement go back to a revival amongst the negroes of North America at the beginning of the present century".<sup>12</sup> Hollenweger gives the impression that the Pentecostal Movement in the USA was a Negro "enthusiastic" expression of Christianity rather than a renewal of New Testament Christianity.<sup>13</sup> And even when he acknowledges the "work of the Holy Spirit", he apparently sees the operation of the Holy Spirit limited to an ecumenical effort in

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(Footnote Continued)

Minn.: Augsburg Pub. House, 1977.

<sup>10</sup>Bloch-Hoell, Nils: The Pentecostal Movement. London: Allen & Unwin, 1964.

<sup>11</sup>Pomerville, Paul A.: The Third Force in Missions. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1985, pp.45-47.

<sup>12</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.xvii.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp.23-24.

bringing together North American white and black Christians in the Azusa revival.<sup>14</sup>

Likewise, Nils Bloch-Hoell's view of the Pentecostal Movement is unbalanced with regard to the divine dimension. Disregarding the spiritual dynamics of the Movement, he states that because of its strong emotionalism, the Pentecostal Movement, "...presents the picture of a primitive form of Christianity"<sup>15</sup>, and "...is ecstatic in nature".<sup>16</sup> He sees the early Pentecostal manifestation of tongues for example, as psychological-pathological in nature.<sup>17</sup> Pomerville is adamant that Bloch-Hoell's treatment of the origins and nature of the Pentecostal Movement is greatly distorted, "He represents a rationalistic-scholastic response to supernatural phenomena; faith is totally subordinated to reason in the discussion of the Pentecostal experience."<sup>18</sup> Pomerville concludes by saying,

His approach is like that of a truncated biblical theology; historical critical methodology is present, but biblical theological presuppositions and interpretation are missing. Such methodology is insufficient for probing the depth of a Christian movement, and it is certainly inappropriate for

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., p.172.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.173.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp.23-24.

<sup>18</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.46.

examining the origins of a Pentecostal Movement.<sup>19</sup>

However, in all fairness we must admit that all writers are reductionist to some extent. There is inevitably an element of reductionism also with Pomerville as well as us. Robert M. Anderson,<sup>20</sup> well-known authority on the history of Pentecostalism, is even more reductionist than Hollenweger and Bloch-Hoell. In a study like ours, you cannot but be reductionist. We, therefore, acknowledge that you can look at the history of the AFM in Africa from the side of the Holy Spirit, but also from the side of social forces. In fact, we have tried to give emphasis to both. But there is another dimension to it, namely, how does the Spirit work? The Spirit does not work except through means. It could well be that one could argue that at the end of the day, what we describe as social forces, must also be described as the Spirit's action in society. We may even argue that "reductionism" is the wrong term, because if one acknowledges that the Spirit is at work in the life of the individual and the world and not only in the believer's heart, then one acknowledges that these things must be understood in terms of a pneumatology. Thus, we acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit and the influence of social

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.47.

<sup>20</sup> Anderson, Robert M.: Vision of the Disinherited. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

force. Thus, there is another way of seeing these two things as two perspectives of one reality.

The Pentecostal worldview and theological perspective emphasize God's action as essential for understanding the Movement's origins. The Movement is then seen as a renewal of the Holy Spirit first and foremost, and only secondly is it a human effort to reinstitute a neglected apostolic orientation within the contemporary church.

### 1. The Pentecostal Movement

Throughout Church history charismatic movements have sporadically broken out in the Church.<sup>21</sup> The modern Pentecostal Movement as such started at the beginning of this century and was viewed initially only as a revival of the charismata, though in due time, Pentecostal churches and assemblies were formed.

As far as the Pentecostals' numerical growth is concerned, church growth specialist Peter Wagner believes that, "Within the Christian family the most dramatic expansion is taking place among those called Pentecostals or

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<sup>21</sup>Latourette, K.S.: A History of Christianity. New York, 1953. Knox, Ronald A.: Enthusiasm. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.

Charismatics."<sup>22</sup> Statistics seem to prove him right. Drawing on the findings of the World Christian Encyclopedia,<sup>23</sup>

Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan comments:

Probably the most unexpected finding in the table is that the Pentecostals now comprise the largest family of Protestants in the World.<sup>24</sup>

The non-pentecostal magazine Christianity Today estimates the worldwide Pentecostal and Charismatic membership a stunning 178 million.<sup>25</sup> Statistician David Barrett in his recent survey of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal, has uncovered a present membership of 332 million persons in 250 countries, growing by 19 million a year.<sup>26</sup>

Pentecostalism is, the general term used to identify those churches and religious groups which teach and practice the charismata of the Apostolic period as described in the New Testament. Pentecostalists regard the word 'pentecost'

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<sup>22</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: Spiritual Power and Church Growth. Altamonte Springs, Fl.: Strang Pub., 1986, p.11.

<sup>23</sup>Barrett, D.B. (ed.): World Christian Encyclopedia, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982.

<sup>24</sup>Synan, Vinson: In the Latter Days: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20th Century. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1984, p.16.

<sup>25</sup>Christianity Today: Spiritual Lifts (editorial), Oct. 1987, p.14.

<sup>26</sup>Barrett, David: "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1988", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Fort Lee, NJ, Jan. 1988, p.16.

as signifying the special emphasis that is placed upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

Donald Gee, one of the leading figures in the Pentecostal Movement has written:

The particular and distinctive testimony of the Pentecostal Movement has been that the outward evidences that accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in primitive Christian experience can be, should be, and are being repeated up-to-date. It is this special witness that has earned for it among its opponents the sobriquet of the 'tongues' Movement.<sup>27</sup>

In a Pastoral letter written by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, the specific characteristics of Pentecostal churches are identified as:

...dat zij datgene wat in de eerste tijd van de christelijke kerk is gebeurd niet als volstrekt 'einmalig' beschouwen, maar dat zij geloven dat de geestesgaven nog precies zo zullen worden geschonken als alle hartstocht leert bidden om de Heilige Geest.<sup>28</sup>

Suffice it to say then, that Pentecostalism teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a specific experience after regeneration, which is accompanied by the speaking in supernatural tongues, also called glossolalia,<sup>29</sup> as described in Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:8; and 1 Cor.14.

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<sup>27</sup> Gee, Donald. The Pentecostal Movement. London: Victory Press, 1941, p. 7,8.

<sup>28</sup> Generale Synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, Herderlijk Schrijven: De Kerk en de Pinkstergroepen. 's-Gravenhage, 1961, p.15.

<sup>29</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., pp.140-147.

The modern Pentecostal Movement, humanly speaking, was the product of a series of revivals beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is not necessary to recount or discuss the origins of the Movement as this has already been done by others.<sup>30</sup> It is necessary, however, to show the historical link between the Pentecostal Movement and developments that led to the emergence of the AFM in South Africa.

Let us now briefly note the main ecclesiastical, religious and social movements and forces which contributed to the rise of Pentecostalism, in order to locate the AFM in relation to it. Of particular importance in this regard were the Holiness Movement,<sup>31</sup> the Keswick Conferences,<sup>32</sup> and the

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<sup>30</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., pp.3-28.  
 Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., pp.5-52.  
 Anderson, op. cit., pp.10-78.  
 Nichol, John T.: The Pentecostals. Plainfield: Logos, 1966, pp.1-39.

<sup>31</sup>The Holiness Movement: Churches and groups belonging to this Movement believe that apart from the experience of conversion and repentance, a 'second work of grace' exists. This second experience is usually identified with sanctification. After this second sanctification experience a person is usually regarded as 'holy'. See: Burgess, Stanley M. & McGee, Gary. (Ed.): Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp.406-409.

<sup>32</sup>The Keswick Conferences: As a result of the revival preaching of Charles Finney, with accompanying new interest in sanctification and consecration, Evan Hopkins, Hartford Battersby and F.B. Meyer started these conferences in 1875  
 (Footnote Continued)

various Revivals<sup>33</sup> which occurred in different parts of the world from the mid-nineteenth century.

According to Davison, Kendrick and Davis, reports exist which confirm that at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, people in different parts of the world were baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit with the accompanying sign of speaking in supernatural tongues.<sup>34</sup> However, what happened in North America is of particular interest and importance for the Pentecostal Movement in South Africa.

Under the ministry of Charles F. Parham we find the first recorded instances of Pentecostalism in the USA.

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(Footnote Continued)

in Keswick, England. This Movement held the view that sanctification was a gradual ongoing process and baptism in the Spirit an endowment of power. This did much to create the right spiritual climate for a "pentecostal breakthrough". See:

Burgess & McGee (Ed.), op. cit., pp.518-519.

<sup>33</sup>Revivals: A revival that had close connection with the Pentecostal Movement is the one from 1904-1906 in Wales. The most formative result of this revival was the creation of a widespread spirit of expectancy for still greater things. In South Africa, Andrew Murray Jnr. was an important instrument of God during the revival that started in Montague, spread to Worcester and from there to the whole country. See:

Du Plessis, J.: The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa. London: Marshall Brothers, 1919.

<sup>34</sup>Davison, op. cit., p.92.  
Kendrick, op. cit., p.33-36.  
Davis, op. cit., p.24-62.



Parham was a former minister of the Methodist Church, but associated more with the Holiness Movement.<sup>35</sup> Following John A. Dowie, he started the Bethel Healing Home in Topeka, Kansas in 1898. During this time he also published a magazine called The Apostolic Faith. Kendrick remarks that after Parham visited various revival centres, he returned to Topeka

...fully convinced that while many had obtained real experiences in sanctification and the anointing that abideth, there still remained a great outpouring of power for Christians.<sup>36</sup>

On October 15th, 1900, the "College of Bethel" was opened in Topeka with about thirty-six students.<sup>37</sup> In a study assignment about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the students unanimously concluded that

...while there were different things that occurred when the Pentecost blessing fell, the indisputable proof on each occasion was that they spoke with other tongues.<sup>38</sup>

J. Roswell Flower is positive that "...it was this decision which has made the Pentecostal Movement of the 20th. Century".<sup>39</sup> Flower is probably overstating his case. The

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<sup>35</sup>For a biography of Parham see: Anderson, op. cit., p.47-61.

<sup>36</sup>Kendrick, op. cit., p.47.

<sup>37</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>38</sup>Kendrick, op. cit., p.51.

<sup>39</sup>Flower, J. Roswell: "Birth of the Pentecostal Movement", in the Pentecostal Evangel, no.1907, Nov.1950, p.3.

first student to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit was Miss Agnes N. Ozman on January 1, 1901 after Parham had prayed a short prayer for her with the laying on of hands.<sup>40</sup> Within a short while, many other students had the same testimony, including Parham. Through Parham's campaigns and publications the news soon spread to Galena, Kansas; Joplin, Missouri; Houston, Texas.<sup>41</sup>

Although Parham's students had experienced glossolalia in January 1901, the spark was quickly extinguished and by 1903 Parham had returned to his original emphasis on divine healing.<sup>42</sup>

The events which, more than any other, gave great momentum to Pentecostalism were those in connection with Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California.<sup>43</sup> It was while people were praying for renewal in Los Angeles that a black minister of the Holiness Movement, William Joseph

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<sup>40</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.53.

<sup>41</sup> Moller, F.P.: Die Diskussie oor die Charismata soos wat dit in die Pinksterbeweging Geleer en Beoefen Word. Braamfontein: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1975, p.16.

<sup>42</sup> MacRobert, Iain: The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988, p.81.

<sup>43</sup> Pentecostal Evangel: "When the Spirit fell in Los Angeles". 6th April 1946, p.6.

Seymour,<sup>44</sup> was invited to conduct meetings there. Seymour was convinced about baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues while attending Parham's Bible school in Houston.<sup>45</sup> When Seymour preached about this in the black Holiness Church in Los Angeles, they stopped his meetings immediately. He then continued preaching in the black residential district in the house of a black couple Richard and Ruth Asbery, in 214 North Bonnie Brae Street.<sup>46</sup> There, regular prayer meetings were held and the group began to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in "tongues" following. At that stage the prayer meetings were still attended solely by blacks.<sup>47</sup> Iain MacRobert quotes Douglas Nelson<sup>48</sup> who described the events of the 9th April, 1906 as follows:

The entire company was immediately swept to its knees as by some tremendous power. At least seven - and perhaps more - lifted their voices in an awesome

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<sup>44</sup>For more about Seymour see: MacRobert, op. cit., pp.48-68. Anderson, op. cit., p.60-70.

<sup>45</sup>Because Seymour was black he was not allowed by Parham to integrate with the other white students, but was "segregated outside the classroom beside the door carefully left ajar by Parham" See: MacRobert, op. cit., p.51.

<sup>46</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.52.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid, p.52.

<sup>48</sup>Nelson, Douglas J.: For Such a Time as This: the Story of Bishop William J. Seymore and the Azusa Street Revival. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1981.

harmony of strange new tongues.<sup>49</sup>

Only on the 12th April was Seymour himself baptized with the Holy Spirit and did he speak in other tongues.

Although it was initially only blacks who met for prayer meetings, many whites also came as people continued to manifest glossolalia, fall into trances and receive healing. Because of the crowding of the people they soon needed a bigger place to worship. They rented an old building in 312 Azusa Street that had formerly been an African Methodist Episcopal Church. Anderson describes it as,

...on a side street in the central urban ghetto amid wholesale houses, stockyards, stables, a lumberyard, and a tombstone shop. It had been converted into a stable and storage warehouse on the ground floor with a rooming house above.<sup>50</sup>

This Azusa Street Mission is regarded by many Pentecostals as the place from which their movement radiated around the world.

The following report about the Azusa revival was published in the Pentecostal Evangel in a distinctly legendary form:

They shouted three days and three nights. It was the Easter season. The people came from everywhere. By the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.53.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.66.

next morning there was no way of getting near the house. As the people came in they would fall under God's power; and the whole city was stirred. They shouted there until the foundations of the house gave way, but no one was hurt. During these three days there were many people who received their baptism who had just come to see what it was. The sick were healed and sinners were saved just as they came in.<sup>51</sup>

For three years continuously, day and night, meetings were held.<sup>52</sup> Anderson questions this by saying,

A great revival is said to have continued night and day at Azusa for three years from the day of its opening. Actually, the saints at Azusa had little real success until July at the earliest.<sup>53</sup>

Anderson continues by saying, "It did not have revival dimensions..."<sup>54</sup>. Whether or not he is correct, is unsure. What is clear, is the fact that many people from many places visited Azusa Street Mission,

It seemed that every one had to go to Azusa. Missionaries were gathered there from Africa, India, and the Islands of the sea. Preachers and workers had crossed the continent, and come from distant islands, with irresistible drawing to Los Angeles.<sup>55</sup>

The magazine Apostolic Faith from time to time published articles and news of the Azusa Street revival. The news and testimonies about it spread speedily all over the world. Klaude Kendrick testifies,

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<sup>51</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit. p.23.

<sup>52</sup>Moller, 1975, op. cit., p.17.

<sup>53</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p.66.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid, p.66.

<sup>55</sup>Bartleman, Frank: Azusa Street. New Jersey, 1980, p.53. Bartleman personally witnessed what happened at Azusa.

Within a matter of months Pentecostal missions were springing up in all parts of the United States. Very shortly after 1906 the 'full gospel' could be found on every continent.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly something happened at Azusa, which caused a veritable explosion of worldwide evangelistic activity which within two years had spread to more than fifty nations.<sup>57</sup>

There is no doubt that Azusa Street Mission benefited from the great earthquake that hit San Francisco on the 18th April 1906. The importance of this fact should not be underestimated. Pentecostal spokesman Frank Bartleman attested to this by saying:

The San Franciscan earthquake was surely the voice of God to the people on the Pacific Coast. It was used mightily<sup>58</sup> in conviction, for the gracious after revival.

Anderson endorses this, by stating: "The work, it seems, received its first major impetus from the San Francisco earthquake of April 18th."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Kendrick, op. cit., p.70.

<sup>57</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.81.

<sup>58</sup> Bartleman, Frank: What really happened at Azusa Street. Northridge, CA., 1962, p.29

<sup>59</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.67.

## The "black roots" of Pentecostalism

Highly significant for our study is the fact that Azusa conclusively proves that the modern 20th century Pentecostal Movement was essentially Black in origin. Black Pentecostal, James S. Tinney asserts that "Pentecostalism, both black and white, was essentially Black in origin..."<sup>60</sup> Black Pentecostal historian, Leonard Lovett believes that,

One cannot meaningfully discuss the origins of contemporary pentecostalism unless the role of blacks is clearly defined and acknowledged.<sup>61</sup>

Iain MacRobert thus correctly infers that important

Elements in the religion of Seymour, of other black Americans,... cannot be fully understood without some consideration of their African origins and the conditions of slavery under which a black understanding of Christianity was formed.<sup>62</sup>

MacRobert goes on to show that the black understanding and practice of Christianity which developed in the crucible of New World slavery was a syncretism of Western theology and West African religious practice and beliefs.<sup>63</sup> He quotes Gayroud Wilmore who summarizes the underlying African elements in the black religious community of the USA, as consisting of:

... A deep sense of the pervasive reality of the spirit world, the blotting out of the line between the sacred and the profane, the practical use of religion in all of life; reverence for ancestors and their real or

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<sup>60</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.77.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p.8.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p.9.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp.9-36.

symbolic presence with us, the corporateness of social life, the source of evil in the consequences of an act rather than in the act itself, and the imaginative and creative use of rhythm - singing and dancing<sup>64</sup> - in the celebration of life and the worship of God.

All of these elements of African black religion were found in some form, however attenuated, in the black religion of the 18th and 19th centuries and were absorbed into black Christianity in the Caribbean, South America, and the United States.<sup>65</sup> To these West African concepts were added freedom, equality, black personhood and dignity, the Second Advent, and divine intervention or at least divine aid.<sup>66</sup> MacRobert is convinced that

Bishop Seymour and other black Americans who gathered together in Los Angeles shared a common religious heritage which was to become part of the early Pentecostal movement and which endures in a more or less attenuated form among black Pentecostals in the United States, the Caribbean and Britain today.<sup>67</sup>

Unlike most white pentecostals, the black origins of the movement were recognised by the Dutch Pentecostal leader G.R. Polman, as well as British critic of the movement, Sir

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p.29.

<sup>65</sup>During the frontier camp meetings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the revivalist and Pentecostal services of the 20th century, black participants were generally noisier, more active and displayed greater spontaneity, rhythm, dance and enthusiastic motor behaviour than their white counterparts. See: MacRobert, op.cit., p.29.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p.36.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.



Robert Anderson.<sup>68</sup> White Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan writes,

That the one outstanding personality in bringing about the Pentecostal revival in Los Angeles was a Negro is a fact of<sup>69</sup> extreme importance to Pentecostals of all races.

Lovett notes rightly, that

Previous studies on pentecostalism have not viewed black pentecostalism in its proper historical context because of a failure to appreciate the full spectrum of the heritage of<sup>70</sup> blacks who were numbered among the pentecostals...

White Pentecostals have generally attempted to obscure or deny the black roots of their movement. MacRobert sums it up well, saying

Many white Pentecostals I have spoken to - both British and American - are profoundly embarrassed by the black origins of their movement and are quick to refute the leading role played by Seymour. They would rather rehabilitate Parham - even if he was homosexual, at least he was white - or deny the existence of human<sup>71</sup> leadership, than accept a black man as their founder.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp.81-82.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.xiii.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.89.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.89.

A new study by James R. Goff has come to our attention, namely, Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham And The Missionary Origins Of Pentecostalism, University of Arkansas Press, 1988. This study argues a different position than ours, making much less of the "black roots of Pentecostalism". It is possible that in the light of this new research our argument needs to be modified. However, since we have at this stage no access to this material, and this point is not the central theme of this thesis, we will not pursue the matter.

Although the Azusa revival played a significant role in the history of Pentecostalism, it must be seen in proper perspective.<sup>72</sup> Historical evidence indicates that it was central to the formation of the Pentecostal Movement in the USA, and there is no question that its influence went beyond the borders of the nation. But there is no evidence to support what Paul Pomerville calls, the "Jerusalem-Centrifugal" theory.<sup>73</sup> Many historians supporting this theory, cite Azusa and therefore the USA as the origin of the worldwide Pentecostal Movement. A possible source for this viewpoint is Frank Bartleman who participated in the Azusa revival, and who wrote, "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles, the American Jerusalem".<sup>74</sup> Likewise, Bruner writes, "Pentecostalism, which we shall see was born in America [and] appears to have been exported there from around the world...".<sup>75</sup> In the introduction to Bartleman's book Azusa Street, pentecostal historian Vinson Synan leaves the same impression.

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<sup>72</sup>The argument that follows is not to diminish the important catalyst role that blacks played during the birth of contemporary Pentecostalism, but rather to put the whole Azusa revival in proper perspective as to its role in the origin of worldwide Pentecostalism.

<sup>73</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., pp.47-52.

<sup>74</sup>Bartleman, op. cit., p.63.

<sup>75</sup>Bruner, Frederick Dale: A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, p.39.

Such observations detract from the original impetus of the Movement, and lead to a misunderstanding about its nature.

The Movement appears to some, therefore, as an American contextualization of the Christian faith (Brunner 1970, 39). Or it appears as a mere psychosociological phenomenon due to economic and social deprivation (Bloch-Hoell 1964, 144, 173-174; Hollenweger 1972, 23-24), rather than a divine renewal of the church in the context of salvation history.<sup>76</sup>

One almost suspects Walter Hollenweger of supporting the "Jerusalem-Centrifugal" theory, but then he corrects himself by mentioning prior Pentecostal outpourings of the Spirit in Germany, Wales and India before the 1906 Azusa revival.<sup>77</sup> Assemblies of God historian William Menzies is more balanced in saying,

From 1905 to 1910, Pentecostal revivals erupted in widely scattered parts of the world: the United States and Canada, Great Britain, Holland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Chile, and India. Some of these occurred without visible links with one another; others were the result of revival reports falling on fertile soil... It would not be accurate to ascribe the entire story of the spread of the Pentecostal message to the Great Revival at Azusa Mission in Los Angeles, but without question it was the center that was the most significant

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<sup>76</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.49.

For a further refutation of the "Jerusalem-Centrifugal" theory see:

Davison, Leslie: Pathway to Power, the Charismatic Movement in Historical Perspective. London: Fountain Trust, 1971, p.92.

Kendrick, Klaude: The Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement. Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Pub. House, 1961, pp.33-36.

Davis, George T.B.: When the Fire Fell. Philadelphia, 1945, pp.24-62.

<sup>77</sup> Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.63.

instrument in the proliferation of the Latter Rain.<sup>78</sup>

## 2. The Pentecostal Movement in South Africa

The ministry of Andrew Murray<sup>79</sup> and the revivals<sup>80</sup> at the end of the nineteenth century prepared the way for the emergence of Pentecostalism in South Africa. But Pentecostalism in South Africa as such was the more direct result of the Christian Zionist Movement which emerged at the turn of this century, and the "poor-white" problem which resulted from the Anglo-Boer War.

### (1) Christian Zionism in South Africa:

For the sake of clarity, Christian Zionism has nothing to do with modern Jewish Zionism. Zionism in South Africa originated in the USA and is irrefutably linked to the healing movement of John Alexander Dowie.<sup>81</sup> On 22 February

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<sup>78</sup>Menzies, William W.: *Anointed to Serve: The story of the Assemblies of God*. Springfield: Gospel Pub. House, 1971, p.60.

<sup>79</sup>See footnote 33.

<sup>80</sup>See footnote 33.

<sup>81</sup>Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 25 May 1847. He entered the Congregational ministry in Sydney, Australia in 1872. For more about Dowie's "Zionism" and also Zionism in South Africa, see: Sundkler, Bengt: Zulu Zion. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.  
Oosthuizen, G.C.: The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa. University of Zululand, 1987.

1896 Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Church with its headquarters at Zion City, near Chicago. The word "Apostolic" was later added to the name of the church.<sup>82</sup> It thus became the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (CCAC). The word "Apostolic" was subsequently omitted.

Dowie's ministry was known for "Divine healing", baptism of believers by triune immersion, the rejection of all medicine, of alcohol, tobacco and the eating of pork. Apparently his healing ministry was very successful. Oosthuizen writes:

In Leaves of Healing, Nov.1, 1895 there is a picture of Zion Tabernacle No.2 with over a thousand feet of wall space decorated with crutches, boots, plaster casts etc. of every size about which Dowie stated: 'These are real, visible and outward evidences of a real, invisible, and inward faith. Here they are: and the living witnesses who once wore these things have placed their evidence on record, and they have never been contradicted'.<sup>83</sup>

In 1896 Dowie began publishing his monthly Leaves of Healing which was later widely read in South Africa amongst others by Johannes Buchler<sup>84</sup> and P.L. le Roux, a former student of Andrew Murray in Wellington. Sundkler mentions

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<sup>82</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>83</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>84</sup>According to Oosthuizen, Johannes Buchler was a former minister of the Congregational Union, who started missions amongst blacks for the CCAC, in 1897. See: Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.12.

that one can still find battered copies of early issues that are religiously guarded by second and third generation Zulu and Swazi prophets.<sup>85</sup> There are even strong indications that this periodical was widely read by Afrikaner prisoners of war in Ceylon during the "Anglo-Boer War" (1899 - 1902).<sup>86</sup>

The roots of Zionism in South Africa must be linked to three white men, Johannes Buchler, Daniel Bryant, and P.L. Le Roux. According to Mahon:

From all my research in Zion City, it would appear that the Rev. S. Buchler was the first official of the Christian Catholic Church to be appointed in South Africa by Dr. Dowie in 1897.<sup>87</sup>

By "first official" was probably only meant that Buchler was the first person to be appointed as the official representative of the Christian Catholic Church in South Africa.

Buchler was succeeded as leader of the CCAC in South Africa by Daniel Bryant who arrived in Durban on 22 April, 1904. Amongst those to welcome him was ex-"Nederduitse

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<sup>85</sup>Sundkler, op. cit., p. 30

<sup>86</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p. 14

<sup>87</sup>Mahon, E.H.: "The formation of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and its earliest contacts with South Africa", in Religion Alive, ed. Oosthuizen, Johannesburg: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, p. 13

Gereformeerde Kerk"<sup>88</sup> missionary P.L. le Roux who later became President of the AFM. Bryant worked in South Africa for four years, during which time the white Zion assembly whose church was situated in Bree Street, Johannesburg, also called the "Tabernacle", grew considerably. Because the "Tabernacle" played a significant role in the early years of the AFM's history, more will later be said about it. Co-founders of the AFM, John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch who both previously had ties with Zion City in the USA, knew overseer Bryant, but missed him when he returned to North America in 1908, because they were on their way to South Africa.<sup>89</sup>

The person who played the most prominent role in Zionism was P.L. le Roux. According to Oosthuizen

Pieter le Roux has played a decisive role in the initial history of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion among the Blacks, in particular the Zulus, in South Africa.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Although in English known as the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK), the Afrikaans terminology Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) is mostly used in academic documents. Thus the abbreviation NGK will be used when we speak of the Dutch Reformed Church.

<sup>89</sup> Lindsay, Gordon: John G. Lake - Apostle to Africa. Dallas: Christ for the Nations, 1981, p. 25

<sup>90</sup> Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p. 19.

Pieter Louis le Roux was born in Wellington Cape Province on February 25, 1865.<sup>91</sup> Apparently both his parents were Godfearing people. After finishing school he studied at Stellenbosch University. Sadly, six months prior to receiving his B.A. degree he had to suspend his studies because of a financial crisis. Later on he finished his Teachers' Diploma in Cape Town at the age of 22 yrs. On June 22, 1886 he married Miss D.A. v.d. Merwe.

He started teaching in Oudtshoorn, but after three months he became the principle of a school in Jacobsdal. Tragically, after only two years of marriage his wife died at the birth of their first child. Seeing this tragedy as the finger of God, he returned to Wellington where he was trained in Andrew Murray's "Sendinginstituut", as missionary for the NGK. This he completed on August 4, 1890.<sup>92</sup>

Missionaries (eerwaardes) in the NGK at that time were not placed on the same level as pastors (dominees). However, compared with the illiteracy that existed among the early workers of the AFM, Le Roux's training was regarded as

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<sup>91</sup>Comforter, 1913, op. cit., p. 12, gave his birthdate as 1867. However from Le Roux's personal notes that is available in the AFM's Archive it seems to be 25/2/1865.

<sup>92</sup>All of the above information gained from Le Roux's personal notes in the AFM Archive.



outstanding.<sup>93</sup> In August 1890 he was sent out as a missionary by Andrew Murray from Wellington. At the age of 26 he went as an unordained worker for a few years to a mission station in Natal, called Gorden Mission, in order to learn Zulu.<sup>94</sup> From there he went as missionary to Greytown, where he was also to minister to the white NGK community.

One of the first Mission Superintendents of the AFM, W.F. Dugmore, recorded in a biographical sketch of Le Roux, how he met with revival in Greytown.

As the outcome of a great revival among the Dutch farmers, some of them had been preaching to the natives, and Brother Le Roux was used to establish that work. There he saw the power of God manifested in a remarkable way. At times the whole congregation would be on<sup>95</sup> their faces, praying and weeping their way to God.

After working for two years as missionary, Le Roux was ordained as missionary by the NGK on April 11, 1893 at Pietermaritzburg. It was during this time that he met Janie van Rooyen, and on May 22, 1893 they were married. Six sons and two daughters were born out of this second marriage.

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<sup>93</sup> Langerman, Jan L: The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, a Revitalization of the Theological Concepts of Church Ministry. Unpublished D.Min. dissertation at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Ca., 1983, p.95.

<sup>94</sup> Comforter, 1913, p.12.

<sup>95</sup> Dugmore, W.F.: In the Comforter, 1913, p.12.

After their marriage they moved to Wakkerstroom which would become their headquarters for quite some time.<sup>96</sup>

At Wakkerstroom Le Roux experienced a similar revival to that in Greytown.

Natives flocked to the meetings in large numbers, and many conversions took place. After 7 years ministry the church members in the South Eastern Transvaal and Zululand numbered 2000.<sup>97</sup>

It was also during this time that Le Roux rediscovered the biblical truth of "Divine Healing". Most probably the first seeds of this teaching had been sown into his heart by Murray who believed in it fervently. He wrote about it and played a determining role in the promotion thereof. Le Roux met Johannes Buchler who was also interested in the teaching of Divine Healing. These two men corresponded on this topic and Le Roux also wrote to his former mentor, Andrew Murray about Buchler and the subject of healing. On Murray's positive reply, Le Roux made contact with Buchler who was at that time pastor of a coloured church in Johannesburg. Both of them started to preach and to practice divine healing, making constant use of literature received from John A. Dowie, the founder of the Catholic Church in Zion City, USA. When Buchler eventually visited Dowie in Zion City in 1902,

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<sup>96</sup> Comforter, 1948, p.6.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 1913, p.12.

he was bitterly disappointed to discover the "sycophantic personality cult encouraged by 'John Alexander, First Apostle' himself."<sup>98</sup> On his return in 1903, Buchler severed all ties with Zion City and even tried to change the name CCAC to "The Apostolic Faith Mission", but this was refused by the Native Commissioner.<sup>99</sup>

The moment Le Roux started to preach on the subject of divine healing, he came into conflict with his church authorities who ordered him to cease this kind of ministry.

Even Dr. Andrew Murray, the most revered DRC minister in his time 'plainly stated that Divine Healing was the teaching of the Word of God - a glorious, Divine truth', but warned that if he insisted on proclaiming it in public, he might be, 'put aside, as the church would not allow it in its public ministry of the Word'.<sup>100</sup>

This happened just at the beginning of the Boer War (Anglo-Dutch) of 1899-1902. At this stage Le Roux wanted to resign from the NGK, but was requested to continue until after the war. When peace came in 1902, Le Roux once more came under pressure from church leaders and in March 1903 he

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<sup>98</sup>Dowie eventually fell prey to excesses and in 1906 Wilbur Glenn Voliva succeeded and dismissed him. Dowie died on the 9th March 1907, after suffering a stroke. See: Oosthuizen, op. cit., pp.8-9. Sundkler, op. cit., p.30.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid, p. 31

<sup>100</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.20.

resigned and started out on his own "in faith".<sup>101</sup> He had intended to leave the work at Wakkerstroom, but upon meeting the workers and telling them of his decision they said, "Do not leave us - but teach us the way to obey God fully."<sup>102</sup> The result was that 500 of the church members left the NGK with him.

In 1904 Daniel Bryant, as we have noted, came to South Africa and met Le Roux. Bryant preached the baptism of believers and on 11 July 1904 he baptized Le Roux and his wife by triune immersion.<sup>103</sup> Although Le Roux and his wife worked in the Christian Catholic Church in Zion from 1902, they were only ordained in Pretoria on 31 July 1904 to the ministry of that church.<sup>104</sup> Most of his black flock followed him into the CCAC in Zion in spite of the DRC's efforts to persuade them to stay.<sup>105</sup> In 1908 Le Roux joined the new Pentecostal movement, the Apostolic Faith Mission which was founded on 25th May 1908, in Johannesburg by American Pentecostals led by John Lake and Thomas Hesmalhalch.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Langerman, op.cit., p.78-79.

<sup>102</sup>Comforter, 1913, p. 12.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p.21.

<sup>104</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op.cit., p.21.

<sup>105</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>106</sup>Burger, I.S.vd.M.: Die Geskiedenis van die  
(Footnote Continued)

Having no real doctrinal problems with the AFM, many of the Blacks were willing to follow him. They were not, however, willing to discard the name "Zion". Learning about this in 1910, the Executive Council of the AFM decided:

And whereas the natives deem the name of Zion so essential that this portion of our Mission be known henceforth as the Zion Branch of the Apostolic Faith Mission.<sup>107</sup>

In the long run this proved to be no solution. Getting more and more committed to the white AFM in Johannesburg, Le Roux was spending much of his time and energy away from his black assembly in Wakkerstroom. On the 20th February 1915 a Mr. H.M. Powell accused P.L. le Roux that in using the name "Zion Apostolic Church" amongst the blacks "...he is acting dishonestly and especially in representing himself as being a true representative of Zion."<sup>108</sup> The Executive Council then decided to write Powell a letter stating that Le Roux disassociated himself from the "Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion". In a letter received in 1916 by the AFM from the "Zion" Church, the church stated:

... that they were willing to cooperate on the understanding that they would be permitted to carry on their work independently.<sup>109</sup>

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(Footnote Continued)

Apostoliese Geloof Sending van Suid Afrika (1908-1958). D.D. thesis, Pretoria University, 1987.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 20/8/1910, p. 61

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 20/2/1915. It was also decided to use the name Zion on 20/8/1910.

<sup>109</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 13/4/1916.

Although there were already groups in 1904 separated from the main body of the CCAC in Zion,<sup>110</sup> and the proliferation process was already in motion it seems when Le Roux was elected President of the AFM in 1913, things worsened rapidly. This, combined with the rising of strong indigenous black leadership amongst the Zulu Zionists, gave rise to major proliferation of the Zionist Movement into many small "independent" groups each doing its own thing.<sup>111</sup> This can be regarded as a turning point in the history of the AIC's. Hollenweger makes this significant statement,

According to Du Plessis (who refers to statements of the previous secretary of the Apostolic Faith Mission, I.D.W. Bosman), in 1932 112 out of 400 Zionist groups could be shown to be offshoots of the Apostolic Faith Mission.<sup>112</sup>

According to Oosthuizen, moreover, the CCAC in Zion initiated a movement which has become the fastest growing church movement in Africa.<sup>113</sup>

Of the three thousand five hundred denominations within the independent/indigenous church context at least eighty percent have the designation 'Zion' added to their names.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>For example the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, founded by Samuel James Branders. Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.42.

<sup>111</sup>Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., p.37. He also holds this view.

<sup>112</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.172 (footnote 12).

<sup>113</sup>Ibid, p. 37

<sup>114</sup>Ibid, p. 11

In size these churches vary from only a few members to the approximately four million belonging to Bishop Lekganyane's Zion Christian Church at Morija near Pietersburg.

With reference to the relationship between Christian Zionism and the formation of the AFM, the following remarks are necessary. Firstly, Zionism changed considerably through the years. What started out as a white revivalist movement eventually changed into a black revivalist movement. Secondly, in doctrine and practice many things have been added, such as that no shoes must be worn in the "temple"; the wearing of sashes, women wear white cloths around their heads, some of the men carry holy staffs (crosses), drinking of holy water, purification rites, etc. Sundkler mentions that in 1940 when he interviewed Le Roux about the changes that had taken place in Wakkerstroom in those early years, "he (Le Roux) had been disappointed".<sup>115</sup> Thirdly, in some of the proliferated new groups a great interweaving of Zionism, Pentecostalism and traditional black religions (like ancestor-worship) had taken place. Doctrinally one presently finds "Zionistic-type" churches that range from traditional Pentecostalistic, to some so syncretistic that they can hardly be called Christian anymore.

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<sup>115</sup>Sundkler, op. cit., p. 50

It is interesting that this dynamic movement with a constituency now approaching seven million, started out as a white Zion. Sundkler remarks:

The movement had begun in a White Zion. But it did not end there. Le Roux and Mahon were, after all, only catalysts. Black Zion was on its own now.<sup>116</sup>

P.L. le Roux can in more than one way be called the "father" of Zionism amongst especially the Zulus. The same can be said about Edgar Mahon amongst the Sothos.<sup>117</sup>

We must not underestimate the preparatory role that Zionism played in the genesis of the AFM. Not only was a key leader like Le Roux a former missionary of Zion, but Lake was also a former elder of Zion in the USA.<sup>118</sup> It seems logical then, that some doctrinal beliefs should have been carried over into the AFM. For example, unlike the majority of Pentecostals worldwide who baptize by single immersion, the AFM baptizes in triune fashion like the Zionists. Zion's heavy emphasis on divine healing accompanied by the total rejection of medicine and doctors, conscientious visitation of people in need, the need for holiness, and taboos regarding tobacco and alcohol can all be found in the pages of the AFM's early history.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>117</sup> For more about Mahon, see: Oosthuizen, 1987, op. cit., pp.24-26; 42-51.

<sup>118</sup> Lindsay, op. cit., p.24.



In Johannesburg almost the whole Zion assembly joined the AFM, and their church, the Tabernacle in Bree street, became the AFM's first headquarters. Many times the only way in which the AFM could gain entrance into a town or community was when the adherents and members of Zion willingly opened their homes for meetings held by the early AFM pioneers.

Among the earliest homes to open for meetings and to help the work and workers, were those of the families Van der Byl and Stuart. These people had been connected with the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, and were hungry for God's best, at any price...<sup>119</sup>

The many schisms of the Christian Zionists became one of its distinctives. The causes of this surely calls for more than the usual simplistic reasons that abound. Oosthuizen touches the core when he says:

Much investigation has to be done why the proliferation of independent churches started initially? Has there not been too much subjective emphasis on the Holy Spirit and too little thorough instruction? The above mentioned words 'not educated' but 'filled with the Holy Ghost and power' are repeated regularly by adherents of the numerous (3270) denominations of the independent indigenous churches.<sup>120</sup>

The rapid growth of Zionism made solid teaching and training almost impossible. It is interesting to note that many

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<sup>119</sup>Burton, W.F.P.: When God Makes a Pastor. London, 1934, pp.31-32.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid, p. 44-45

independent black Zionistic type churches wanted to join the AFM during the early years.<sup>121</sup>

Although the influence of Zion can be clearly traced in the history of the AFM, it is important to note that the AFM was not simply a continuation of the Christian Zion Movement in South Africa. Despite the strong influence of Zionism, the pentecostal experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit distinctly resulted in the birth of an indigenous Pentecostal Church in South Africa.

**(ii) Poor-White problem:**

A very important contributing factor that benefited the rapid acceptance and spread of Pentecostalism in South Africa was socio-economical in nature, namely the poor-white problem after the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902). The majority of white Afrikaners were farmers before the outbreak of the war. When they returned to their farms after the war, everything, including their houses and stocks, were destroyed. The wives and children of many had died in British concentration camps. Not only had they lost their beloved ones and all their possessions, but by losing the war they had also lost their freedom to Britain. Historian E.A. Venter writes:

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<sup>121</sup>Comforter, December/February 1911. Also: The Upper Room, May 1911, p. 6.

Die toestand, in een woord, was haglik! Nog nooit  
tevore was die Afrikaner politiek so verlore en  
ekonomies so verrinneweer nie.<sup>122</sup>

Within a few years a relatively affluent Afrikaner community had been reduced to poverty. Economically it was impossible for the farmers to start farming again without any money, no livestock and no crops whatsoever. The income of the rich goldmines dropped from R32,5 million in 1898 to a mere R2 million in 1901.<sup>123</sup> Most farmers moved to the Kimberley diamondfields and Witwatersrand goldmines where they started working as ordinary labourers.

The urbanization of the "disinherited" Afrikaners brought forth its own problems. High unemployment figures, poor accommodation, cultural eradication, and the influences of a cosmopolitan society, resulted in huge social, moral and spiritual rootlessness and decadence. Drunkenness and other social evils spread quickly amongst them. E.L.P. Stals believes that the poor-white problem reached its peak between 1904 - 1909.<sup>124</sup> It was in this time of crisis, poverty and dislocation for white Afrikaners that the AFM was born in 1908.

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<sup>122</sup> Venter E.A.: Ons Geskiedenisalbum. Potchefstroom, 1983, p.604.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Stals, E.L.P. (Ed.) : Afrikaners in die Goudstad. Cape Town/Pretoria, 1978.

There were certain factors in the midst of the poor-white problem that resulted in the Afrikaners responsiveness towards the early Pentecostal Movement.

Politically, the Afrikaner was alienated from the government during this period. Dr.D.F. Malan declared forcefully:

Genl. Smuts weet dat die volk is besig om hom dood te bloei, maar daarvoor trek hy sy skouers op, draai sy rug op die armblankes en haas hom naar die Imperiale Ekonomiese Konferensie om Britse immigrante te gaan haal teen 300 pond per kop.<sup>125</sup>

Another problem which the poor-white Afrikaner faced was alienation from his church. The rapid urban influx resulted in massive congregations that were much too big for the few "dominees". Although the NGK was well aware of the critical need amongst its members, its ministers concentrated on politics to try and help uplift their people. Education was one of the main areas on which they concentrated, with the result that a number of C.N.O. (Christelike Nasionale Onderwys) schools were started.

While the NGK spent all its energy in the penetration of the structures of society, the poor-whites were yearning for personal spiritual ministry. The early AFM excelled in helping, caring and lovingly ministering to the poverty stricken Afrikaners. J.R. Albertyn holds the view that the

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<sup>125</sup>Malan, D.F.: "Die groot vlug: 'n nabetraging van die armblanke Kongres". Brochure compiled of leading articles in Die Burger, 10-24 July 1923.

poor-whites regarded the NGK as a church for the rich, because of their practise of renting out church pews, excessive rates for performing marriages and baptisms.<sup>126</sup> A member of the NGK wrote in the "Kerkbode" in 1922:

Ons moet dieselfde middel gebruik wat die Apostoliese Broeders gebruik, naamlik persoonlike arbeid. Hul getroos hulself baie opofferinge om die mense in die hande te kry.

... as ek een of ander wat ek daar ontmoet, vra hoe dit kom dat hy ook onder die Apostoliese is, 'A, ou broer, ek was 'n weggegooide, ek was verslaaf aan die drank, en my Kerk se manne het hul aan my nie gesteur nie, en die mense het my aan die hand kom vat en uit die modder uitgely'.<sup>127</sup>

No wonder Stals remarked that literally thousands of Afrikaners became ecclesiastically inactive in such circumstances and abstained from visiting church services.<sup>128</sup> One can understand why the AFM with its emphasis on the ministry of the laity flourished.

A third problem that compounded the Afrikaners' cultural confusion was the triangular language struggle between English, Afrikaans and Dutch.

Baie Afrikaners sou graag Engels magtig wees bloot om praktiese redes soos die verkryging van werk, maar in sy stryd om die behoud van sy kulturele erfenis was hy verdeel tussen Hollands as die erkende taal naas Engels

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<sup>126</sup> Albertyn, J.R.: Die armblanke vraagstuk in Suid Afrika. Carnegie-kommissie, deel 5: Sosiologiese verslag, Stellenbosch: Pro-Ecclesia drukkerij, 1932, pp.72-73.

<sup>127</sup> De Kerkbode, Letter of a NGK member, 23/3/1922, pp.377-378.

<sup>128</sup> Stals, op. cit., p.148.

en sy spreektaal, Afrikaans.<sup>129</sup>

A last factor, was the threat that the impoverished Afrikaners saw in the Blacks. Not only had the Afrikaners to compete with the cheap labour blacks could provide, but the poor-white was also forced to share residential areas like Vrededorp and Burgersdorp, both on the Witwatersrand, with non-whites.

Gedurende die tyd was die groot vrees van die Afrikaners nie dat hulle geassimileer sou word deur die Engelssprekende blanke gemeenskap nie, maar dat hulle verswelg sou word deur die getalsterkere 'Naturelle'. Dit is om die rede dat daar vanuit die NGK en die Afrikaner gemeenskap so 'n geweldige stryd teen die vermenging van swart en blank gevoer is en dat daar gedurig gewys is<sup>130</sup> op die gevaar van dergelike rassevermenging.

Considering the above mentioned factors, it becomes clear that the traditional norms and structures of the Afrikaners, that gave them security and direction, were not present anymore. It was in these critical times that the AFM fulfilled a decisive role in not only reaching the Afrikaner spiritually, but also in restoring their human dignity. General J.B.M. Hertzog said:

As die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika met waarheid opgeteken moet word, dan moet dit bekend word dat die AGS vir twee dinge verantwoordelik is: - sy het 'n groot bydrae gemaak tot die oplossing van die armblankevraagstuk, want sy het die armblankes opgetel

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<sup>129</sup> Holscher, F.: 'n Sosiologiese Studie van die Glossolale verskynsel in die Christelike Godsdienst. M.A. thesis at UNISA, 1976.

<sup>130</sup> Adonis, J.C.: Die Afgebreekte Skeidsmuur weer Opgebou. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982, p.74.

en hulle behoorlik gerehabiliteer deur hulle godsdiens;  
 - en die tweede ding: sy was die instrument in die hand  
 van God om versoening te bring tussen die Britte en die  
 Afrikaners.<sup>131</sup>

In this respect the roots of Pentecostalism in South Africa and in the USA bear much resemblance. Describing USA Pentecostalism, Anderson says: "Pentecostalism was a movement born of radical social discontent..."<sup>132</sup>, and

It was almost exclusively from among these ethnically heterogeneous, struggling working classes and impoverished unemployed that the Pentecostal Movement<sup>133</sup> drew its following in the urban areas of the nation.

It must also be noted that just as the AFM grew out of the "poor-white" problem, so it also found fertile ground amongst the black community who were even more poor and disinherited.

#### **Missionaries to Africa:**

Although it is commonly believed that the pentecostal message was brought to South Africa by the two Americans John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmaihalch, it seems that some individuals had already had some pentecostal experience before they arrived.

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<sup>131</sup>Burger, op. cit., p.148. Personal letter of Hertzog written to Br.D.J.du Plessis(Sr.), father of Dawid and Justus du Plessis.

<sup>132</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p.222.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p.122.

During the Second War of Independence (1899-1904), Solman van Wyk from the farm Van Wyksrus, and Cefas le Roux were taken to Bermuda as prisoners of war. In the prison camp they were in contact with persons who taught the doctrine of baptism with the Holy Spirit with speaking in other tongues. Both of them experienced this personally as was testified by them in letters to their wives. Although this news was apparently not very well received, both wives were also baptized in the Holy Spirit when the men returned home in 1902. Apparently this happened at Klipriviersoog near Mansfield.<sup>134</sup>

On April 1908 a group of people left Indianapolis, called by God to go and preach the "full gospel" to Africa. Originally, there were 17 people in the travelling party, but some remained in England on the way to South Africa. Finally, John G. Lake, his wife and 7 children, Mr. and Mrs. Hezmalhalch, Mr. Lehman and Miss Sackett arrived in South Africa. Other workers from the USA joined them later on.

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<sup>134</sup> Scheepers, Dr H.J.: Lecture held at the AFM Theological College, 1975. (At that time Scheepers was one of the oldest living members of the AFM)



Lehman was the only one who had previously visited Africa. On a former visit he had ministered to Blacks for five years and could speak Zulu.<sup>135</sup>

Tom Hezmalhalch was a preacher from the American Holiness Church who joined Lake in a successful gospel campaign in Zion City, Illinois, before he started off for Africa. Lake was a former elder of the Zion City Apostolic Church when Dowie was still on the crest of the wave. Both Lake and Hesmalhalch sold everything they had before coming to South Africa. Their motive for this drastic step was that they wanted to make themselves "wholly dependent upon God" for their support, "and abandoned" themselves "to the preaching of Jesus".<sup>136</sup> Lake played a very important role in

the history of the AFM, therefore we will take a brief look at his biography.<sup>137</sup>

Born on March 18, 1870 at St. Mary's, Ontario in Canada, John Graham Lake later moved with his parents to Sault

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<sup>135</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>136</sup>Lake, John G.: Adventures in God. Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, 1981, p.61.

<sup>137</sup>More comprehensive biographical studies of Lake are: Lindsay, Gordon: John G. Lake - Apostle to Africa. Dallas: Christ for the Nations, 1981. Burger, op. cit., pp.128-162.

Sainte Marie in North Michigan, USA. In October 1891 he was ordained by the Methodist Church in Chicago and was called to a church in Peshtigo, Wisconsin but he declined. In February 1893 he married Jenny Stevens of Newberry, Michigan. One can only appreciate Lake's emphasis on and understanding of Jesus as Healer if you evaluate his background. Lake's testimony is that their home was constantly under the grim dark shadow of sickness and death.

A strange train of sicknesses, resulting in death, had followed the family. For 32 years some member of the family was an invalid.<sup>138</sup>

Lake came to know Jesus as Healer, when in desperation they took his dying brother to Alexander Dowie's House of Healing in Chicago. After prayer with laying on of hands, the dying man was immediately healed. Immediately they also took their sister who had cancer for prayer. She also was healed. As a family they now prayed for the other dying sister and the Lord also healed her.

The crux of the revelation that Jesus is still the Healer, came to Lake when he prayed for his very sick wife and she was healed.<sup>139</sup> The news about this remarkable healing spread rapidly through the town and to the

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<sup>138</sup> Lake, 1981, op. cit. p.73.

<sup>139</sup> Lake, 1981, op. cit. p.79-80.

newspapers and soon many people visited Lake for prayer for healing.<sup>140</sup>

It seems as if Lake was in a constant struggle with God's calling on the one hand, and his highly successful business career on the other hand. After a struggle of about three months he decided to sell everything and divide it according to what he thought was in the best interest of God's Kingdom. As for Lake he was now "wholly dependant upon God..." and free to work fulltime for the Lord just as he felt led to do.<sup>141</sup> While ministering in a city in northern Illinois, God's Spirit clearly spoke to him, "Go to Indianapolis and prepare yourself for a campaign during wintertime. In the spring you will go to Africa."<sup>142</sup> On the first of April 1908 the party left Indianapolis for Africa. On arrival in Johannesburg they were met by Mrs. C.L. Goodenough, who told them, "The Lord sent me to meet you, and I want to give you a home."<sup>143</sup> That same day the party moved into her furnished house in the suburbs of Johannesburg.

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid, p. 80-81.

<sup>141</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.20.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid. p.29.

<sup>143</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.23.

According to tradition Mahatma Ghandi once visited a white AFM church somewhere on the West-Rand but was refused entrance because he was an Indian.<sup>144</sup> It is, therefore, indicative of Lake's impact in South Africa that Ghandi is reported as saying: "Dr. Lake's teachings will eventually be accepted by the entire world".<sup>145</sup> Cecil John Rhodes is reported to have said: "Dr. John G. Lake's healing ministry is one of the most remarkable the world has ever seen". And Andrew Murray commented: "The man reveals more of God than any other man in Africa".<sup>146</sup>

On December 23, 1908 Lake's wife died of a heart attack. Lake returned to the USA in 1913. Lindsay reports that when Lake returned to the USA after only five years of ministry in South Africa, he left 125 white assemblies and 500 black assemblies behind him.<sup>147</sup> Although Lake's early ministry made a big impact in South Africa, this figure

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<sup>144</sup>Told to me by Izak Kruger who is a former member of the white Executive Council of the AFM. No documentary proof of this could be found. This is not documented in Ghandi's autobiography:  
Ghandi, Mohandas K.: An Autobiography. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.

<sup>145</sup>Lake, John G.: Adventures in God. Tulsa: Harrison House, 1981, Backpage. This manuscript was compiled by Lake's son-in-law, Wilford H. Reidt. His source for these quotes is unfortunately not given.

<sup>146</sup>Lake, 1981, op. cit., Backpage.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid. p.53.

seems to be a little exaggerated. Lake married again late in the same year a certain Florence Switzer and moved to Spokane.<sup>148</sup> There he started one of the most remarkable healing ministries in the history of the Church. Lindsay quotes Dr. Ruthlidge of Washington D.C. as having said: "Rev. Lake through divine healing has made Spokane the healthiest city in the world, according to United States statistics."<sup>149</sup> While we do not doubt that Lake's healing ministry made an impact on the community of Spokane, Ruthlidge's statement is probably grossly overinflated. Lake died in Spokane on September 16, 1935 at the age of 65.

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<sup>148</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.53.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid. p. 4.

## CHAPTER 2: THE FORMATION OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION AND THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION IN AFRICA

Although our focus in this thesis will increasingly be on the AFM in Africa, this cannot be discussed in isolation from the birth and early development of the white AFM for the sake of clarity and presenting a complete picture. The history of the white AFM will not be dealt with comprehensively, however, as such a study has already been done.<sup>150</sup> Events will be dealt with in chronological order, but when a major theme is found it will be developed fully before returning to that chronological point.

### 1. The Formation Of The AFM:

In April 1908 Lake and his party arrived in South Africa. Traditionally May 25th, 1908 is regarded as the birthdate of the AFM.<sup>151</sup> They started their ministry in a church for black people in Doornfontein, Johannesburg.<sup>152</sup> Like the birth of Pentecostalism in the USA, the services were racially fully integrated:

The racial spirit is very strong in Johannesburg, and the white population, as a rule would scorn to sit in the same place of worship as the natives. Now, however there was a great wave of conviction, and hunger after God, so that in the Little Doornfontein Chapel all

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<sup>150</sup> Burger, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup> Burger, op. cit., p.204.

<sup>152</sup> Langerman, op. cit., p.80.

shades of colour and all degrees of the social scale mingled freely in their hunger after God.<sup>153</sup>

Lindsay reported that "From the very start it was as though a spiritual cyclone had struck Doornfontein".<sup>154</sup> Within weeks hundreds of people were saved, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and many healed of all kinds of sicknesses. Apparently many whites visited the services after hearing of what was happening there.<sup>155</sup>

When the initial meeting place in Doornfontein grew too small, fifteen home meetings were simultaneously organised, while a big prayer meeting was also held, at the Schumans' home.<sup>156</sup> As a direct result of their blessed ministry amongst the blacks, Lake and his party were invited to the white Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (CCAC) in Zion that was situated in Bree Street, Johannesburg. This was a large spacious church that could seat at least 600 people. It seems that almost all the members of this church received the blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This must have been the first organised Pentecostal assembly in South Africa.

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<sup>153</sup>Burton, op. cit., p.32.

<sup>154</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.25.

<sup>155</sup>Le Roux, Pieter L.: "The Central Tabernacle" in The Comforter Magazine, Oct.1913. p. 2.

<sup>156</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.26.

This church building in Bree street was to play a significant role in the history of the AFM. P.L.le Roux, who was later president of the AFM, recorded the history of this church in an article he wrote for the Comforter, the official magazine of the AFM.<sup>157</sup> The Central Tabernacle or "Old Tabernacle" as it was known, was erected by the Presbyterians as a place of worship. They rented it to the "Zion Church" (Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion) under Mr. Bryant and for four years the gospel of "Salvation, Healing and Holy Living" was preached.

The teaching spread far and wide over the whole of South Africa. It reached the natives, who turned to Jesus their Healer in large numbers. Among the Zulus, as well as the Basuto, the teaching that Jesus is the saviour of the soul and body struck deep root. These all learned to look toward the old Tabernacle as the place from which the blessing of God was flowing over the country.<sup>158</sup>

Le Roux recalled that when Lake and Hesmalhalch started to minister in the Tabernacle,

...the crowds flowed in, hundreds were saved and numbers baptized in the Spirit. The sick and the suffering came and received their healing. There was great rejoicing. The presence and the power of God became more real and evident and lives were endued with real power.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Le Roux, 1913, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, P. 2.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.



People who visited Johannesburg and the meetings in the Tabernacle went back to their homes and became the bearers of good tidings to their friends.

From all over the country many today look to the Tabernacle as the place from which the Full Gospel emanated which brought them salvation and healing.<sup>160</sup>

Later the Central Tabernacle became the headquarters of the AFM until November 1913.<sup>161</sup>

Lindsay states that at this time the power of God rested so heavily on the early preachers that when Lake, for instance, greeted the people by shaking their hands when they entered the hall, they would fall down under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.<sup>162</sup> Whether this is exaggerated or factual is hard to prove. It is important to mention, however, that at this stage nobody really wanted to start a new denomination. Although people from almost every denomination visited the meetings, they all initially returned to their own churches and desired to bring renewal within these existing mainline churches.

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<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Probably the AFM took over the lease from "Zion", but never owned it. See: Burger, op. cit., p.198.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid, p. 29.

The first minutes in the history of the AFM attest to this fact.<sup>163</sup> Their business was conducted in a very unofficial way with no clearly defined organizational structure. The first time the matter of a constitution came under discussion, was on May 27, 1909,<sup>164</sup> and a draft set of rules and regulations was laid before the meeting held on June 4, 1909.<sup>165</sup> This constitution seemed to be shelved for a few years, the adherents still trying to bring renewal to the mainline churches.

On August 20, 1910 the AFM decided to print their first baptismal certificates, 2500 in Sesutho and 2500 in Zulu, as well as 2500 each in Dutch and English.<sup>166</sup> This must have been the first definite indication of a new denomination being formed.

At a general conference meeting held in Johannesburg on October 4, 1912, the draft constitution prepared in 1909 was, however, accepted and on August 2, 1913, it was decided to register the newly formed church, the Apostolic Faith

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<sup>163</sup> Minute Books of the AFM are available from 1908 onwards, in the archive, at the AFM's headquarters, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg

<sup>164</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council (served as provisional Minute Book). 1909, p.35.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p.36.

<sup>166</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, op. cit., 1910.

Mission of South Africa, under the Companies Act as an unlimited liability company. The reason why the AFM was registered as a company and not as a church is not clear. Langerman holds the view that they could not register under Church Law due to the protest of the mainline churches. They declared the new movement to be sectarian.<sup>167</sup> Burger thinks it was due to their "anti-church" sentiments.<sup>168</sup> In a Private Law of 1961, their motivation was that "die ledetal van die sending nog nie so 'n omvang bereik het dat dit algemene erkenning as 'n kerk verkry het nie".<sup>169</sup> Most probably it was a combination of all three factors that resulted in the AFM being first registered as a company. The AFM continued to operate under the Companies Act until 1961, when by way of Private Law number 24 of 1961, it was given Church status by the South African Government.

That the young Pentecostal Church was called the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa was by no means coincidental. Although there are quite a few theories about the origin of the name,<sup>170</sup> it is clear that when Lake and his party arrived in South Africa they already had a name in

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<sup>167</sup>Langerman, op. cit., p.81.

<sup>168</sup>Burger, op. cit., pp.264-265.

<sup>169</sup>Kerkwette van die AGS, Introduction to the Private Law of 1961. Available at the AFM headquarters, Lyndhurst.

<sup>170</sup>Burger, op. cit., pp.225-232.

mind under which they has planned to conduct their meetings.

The heading of their first business meeting reads:

Meeting of the Trustees of the Apostolic Faith  
Mission in the Tabernacle c/o Bree and Van Willigh  
Street on Thursday Night Sept. 17th 1908.<sup>171</sup>

This name clearly originated with Charles Parham's revivalistic movement which he called "Apostolic Faith Movement" (it was also sometimes called Apostolic Faith "Mission"), while the newspaper that he distributed was called The Apostolic Faith.<sup>172</sup> When in the midst of the Asuza street revival the "Asuza mission" was organised, it was called "Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission", a name that was painted in crude letters across the side of the building.<sup>173</sup> Most of the time it was just plainly called "Apostolic Faith Mission". Because the biggest part of the early Pentecostal Movement had directly or indirectly close contact with Parham, Seymour and the Asuza revival, the names "Apostolic Faith Mission/Movement" and "Pentecostal" were almost synonyms in this early period. Lake proved this when he said:

Soon the fire began to fall at the Asuza  
Street Mission, Los Angeles, which became known  
world-wide as a great centre of Holy Ghost power. After

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<sup>171</sup> Minutes of the Trustees, 17/9/1908, p.1, Available at the AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>172</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., pp.18-19. See also: Anderson, op. cit., pp.47-61.

<sup>173</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.70.

considerable time the work spread throughout the whole country and world, until every land has its representatives of the Apostolic Faith Mission, and Pentecost is a household word.<sup>174</sup>

When Lake and Tom Hesmalhalch arrived in South Africa they called themselves "Apostolic Faith Missionaries", in the periodical Forerunner of God's Latter Rain.<sup>175</sup> One can understand that the early pentecostal pioneers in South Africa were content with this name, if one takes into account their initial feeling that it ought to be only an evangelistic Mission and not a constitutionalized Church. Early President P.L.le Roux summed up the dynamics behind the name when he said:

We call ourselves the Apostolic Faith Mission, we expect the same power to rest upon us that rested on the early church, and we expect to do the same work.<sup>176</sup>

Although Lake and his followers laid great emphasis on experiences like healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the highest priority was given to the salvation of men and women. Lindsay in his study of the early AFM and its leaders, attests to this fact.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup>Lake, John G.: Comforter, May/June 1911.

<sup>175</sup>Burger, op. cit., p.227.

<sup>176</sup>Le Roux, P.L., in the Comforter, June 1916, p.6.

<sup>177</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.33.

Lindsay also mentions that Lake and his group had great financial and material needs.<sup>178</sup> Most probably this was because they were not yet constituted as a church and no offerings were taken or salaries paid to the workers. "On the whole the people did not think of the supplies, believing that Lake must be supported by some society overseas."<sup>179</sup> The first mentioning of tithes is in the minutes of January 2, 1909. In the meantime the workers had to live "by faith". Lake explained this in the following way:

For the benefit of those not familiar with our methods of ministry and operation, we would say that on general lines our work is conducted through ministries and local preachers, much on the same lines as the original Wesleyans of England. However we have no salaried ministry. Every man's labour in the Lord in whatever capacity, whether as superintendent, as pastor or local preacher, editor, stenographer, or in fact, in any capacity whatsoever is free, and there is no one who receives a salary. Every worker is required to trust God alone for his or her sustenance, without any aid from the Mission.

Nevertheless, when donations or offerings are made to the Mission the funds are distributed by the Executive Council...<sup>180</sup>

At a meeting of what they called the "Trustees" of the AFM held in the Tabernacle on September 17, 1908, they

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>180</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, Nov.1910. (page numbers not always available because of age and condition of documents)

decided to start ministering bilingually in Dutch as well as English. The Tuesday meeting of every week would be held in Dutch. At this meeting of the Trustees they also discussed the importance of a place of worship that was bigger and would be able to accommodate the "coloured" people. It seems that in the beginning no differentiation was made between blacks, coloureds and Indians and that all non-whites were referred to as "coloureds".

The first officially recorded discussion of separate worshipping facilities for the different races was recorded on the 17th September 1908,

Brother Lake draws the attention of the meeting to the necessity of getting adequate accommodation for the holding of services in Doornfontein especially for the coloured people"<sup>181</sup>

The development of the policy of racial segregation will be discussed later on.

In the above mentioned minutes, attention is also called to Mrs. Goodenough, an American missionary who gave the Lake's a home on their arrival. She was willing to let one of her cottages for three pounds per month, to be used as a place of worship for the Coloureds. She agreed to the removal of the inside wood partitions to make it one large hall. This cottage was situated at 43 Van Beeck Street.

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<sup>181</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 17 Sept. 1908.

Amongst the condition of lease was that they were not supposed to open the back doors, use water or the latrines! Such inherent racial prejudice is indicative of the role that racism was to play in the structuring of the church. No further mention will be made of similar incidents until the section on race relations and the development of segregation in the AFM.

One of the first "converts" of the AFM was the former NGK "Dominee", Johannes van der Wall. Van der Wall was one of the first general secretaries of the AFM and had extensive theological training. As a former "dominee" of the NGK, he was disciplined by them. Lake states that Van Der Wall was an alcoholic for ten years, but was delivered and reconverted when he attended one of Lake's meetings.<sup>182</sup> After his remarkable deliverance he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and joined the AFM. Before Hesmalhalch and Lake left for their tour of the British Isles, Europe and the USA, they gave Van der Wall the necessary power to act on their behalf, and that of the AFM during their absence<sup>183</sup>. There is no doubt that the two former Dutch Reformed Ministers, Van der Wall and later P.L. le Roux played significant roles in the early development of the AFM. Amongst the early

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<sup>182</sup> Lake, John G.: Personal diary of Lake, Tuesday 6 December 1910, available at the AFM archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>183</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p. 50



leaders with limited education, their academic training and experience of church organization and knowledge of the policy of the Dutch Reformed Church was highly valued.

#### **Black presence in the AFM:**

Quite often black workers of the Independent type churches, both Zionist and Ethiopian, contacted the AFM for association. For example, on Saturday January 2, 1909, four "native brethren" representing congregations of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion of which Mr. Brander of Pretoria was overseer, held talks with Lake, Lehman, Cooper, Kretzman, Smith and Schumann. The following statement followed,

We, the undersigned Council of the Apostolic Faith Movement hereby agree that as soon as resignations are presented by the Elders and the members of the Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion, to their general overseer, we will accept them forthwith as members and workers of the Apostolic Movement, herewith pledging our prayers and cooperation in every way possible, that the name of Jesus may be glorified and sinners saved, sanctified and baptized with the Holy Spirit and be healed.<sup>184</sup>

In 1910 it was documented that two preachers from the "Ethiopian Church" wanted to join the AFM.<sup>185</sup> At another time Lake reported that 18 churches, and 6 churches of the "Native Catholic" type wanted to join the AFM because they

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<sup>184</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p.17-18.

<sup>185</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 11/11/1910.

had heard of "our love for the nations".<sup>186</sup> As a matter of fact, it was regarded as very important to assimilate as many of the black independent groups as possible:

A circular had been printed in Zulu and Sesotho and was being sent to those in Kindred Bodies inviting them to unite with us. It was necessary that we take up our responsibilities and pull the work in line all through. If all the struggling Native Bodies could be picked up and consolidated a National Service would be rendered.<sup>187</sup>

From the above it is safe to assume that in 1917 already numerous independent black Pentecostalist churches existed.

The reasons why these Independent churches sought association and for some, affiliation with the AFM, varied but the most important was that they wanted some form of government recognition. Such recognition was important for the African churches for psychological reasons, which, according to Hollenweger, "must not be underestimated...".<sup>188</sup> But it had other important dimensions as well. The government stipulated that mission work must be under white supervision in order to qualify for church sites, and be able to negotiate over governmental issues. Governmental recognition also entitled pastors to reduced rail fares, and it permitted them to buy wine for the Lord's

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<sup>186</sup>The Upper Room. Magazine printed and distributed in California, USA, 1910.

<sup>187</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 6/10/1917, p.147.

<sup>188</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.154.

Supper. In order for pastors to be appointed as marriage officers by the government they needed some form of theological training which they hoped to get from the AFM. Perhaps they also hoped for financial assistance to help build churches and pay salaries.

Not long after this a meeting was held between the AFM and the "Zion Church"<sup>189</sup>, probably the Christian Catholic Church in Zion (also sometimes called Christian Catholic Apostolic Church), or shortly called "Zion Church" or only "Zion". Zion was represented by Brothers Sheppard, Osborn and Mapstone. Mention was made of P.L. le Roux who was in charge of their mission work in the Transvaal and brother Mahon in the Orange River Colony. At this meeting it was decided in connection with certificates for "native workers" that, "...the Apostolic Faith Mission and Zion Church mutually acknowledge each others' certificates".<sup>190</sup> Because the Central Tabernacle at that time still belonged to Zion they also discussed: the rent of the Tabernacle, tithing, and the intention of the AFM to receive their own tithes from then on. Further discussion of the native work followed, although no details of this discussion are given.

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<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 1909, p. 7.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid., 1909, p. 7.

E. Letwaba:

The "native preacher" Elias M. Letwaba is first mentioned in the minutes dated February 18, 1909. Letwaba was to become one of the most outstanding black leaders in the history of the AFM. Because of the significant role he played in the history and development in the black "section" of the AFM, a biographical sketch is given here.

Letwaba's father was described as a committed Christian who loved his bible and spent much time in prayer. Six months before the birth of Elias Letwaba, his mother had a remarkable experience while grinding coffee beans one day. A man in white appeared before her in the dazzling sunlight. To her astonishment he declared:

You will soon have a strong baby boy. He is a messenger for me, to carry the Gospel to many places. He will suffer much weariness and persecution, but I will be with him and protect him till the end of his life, making him an instrument in My hands to be a blessing to thousands and to establish many churches.<sup>191</sup>

The visitor disappeared just as quickly as he appeared, leaving the woman to commit herself unconditionally to the Lord. Whether it was a real experience for Letwaba or whether it was an experience that could be accounted for in terms of an "annunciation" story is beside the point. For the Pentecostal, the reality of it is fundamental. For

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<sup>191</sup>Dugmore, Sister: "Letwaba...a servant of God." in the Comforter, June 1959, p.8. The writer and her husband were also missionaries, and knew Letwaba very well.

another person this is a fairly familiar genre, an "annunciation" story. It does not alter the significance of it for Letwaba or for what we are saying.

Letwaba was born around about 1870 and was from the beginning of his life exposed to influences that were contrary to the normal upbringing of black people. His parents spoke Afrikaans in their home together with their native language Sindebele. This resulted in access to a much larger literature than was possible for Sindebele speakers. As a child Letwaba was in constant contact with the children of the missionaries and visiting preachers and thus grew up in a Christian environment. His father did not allow him to attend initiation feasts and schools which would normally have been culturally very important for him. This cost father and son a heavy price in reproach and derision.

Apparently he mentioned in his conversations with his mother from very early on the desire to become a preacher. Le Roux relates in a biographical sketch of Letwaba, how he felt called by God at the age of 14, just after rescuing a man from drowning in a river. He said he was "called to rescue men and women out of the black river of sin and death".<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>Le Roux, P.L.: "Konferensie van Naturelle Predikers" in the Trooster (Comforter), Feb. 1933, p10.

Lindsay mentions that it was also at the age of 14 that Letwaba received his first Bible from a white man for whom he worked as leader of a team of oxen.<sup>193</sup> At the age of 19, he joined the Berlin Lutheran Mission and went into training under that Mission as a preacher. He soon learned German and devoured many books to which that language gave him access. In his relentless search for a greater revelation of the power of God, he left them and joined the Bapedi Lutherans. With these people he laboured for nineteen years. In all these years of ministry he felt as if something was still missing. Through an European missionary and a native preacher, Letwaba found his way to meetings of John G. Lake. When he heard and saw what God was doing, he realised that that was what he had been searching for. Letwaba had never expected to see such demonstrations of Divine Power. He stayed with Lake at his home for a while where he was further taught by Lake. He travelled with Lake and Hesmalhalch to Bloemfontein and was baptised in the Holy Spirit on February 9, 1909. His first act was to go and tell his father of his new joy. The old man also asked for the water baptism and later was baptised in the Holy Spirit. From that time, Letwaba travelled, preaching this wonderful

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<sup>193</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.41.

news of salvation and healing and urging Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>194</sup>

Letwaba was one of the first black workers in the AFM. Most of the time he worked for the meager salary of 5 pounds per month. It is clear that Letwaba had a very strong following. In the minutes of an Executive Council meeting on March 15, 1913 a conference held by "Letwaba's people" is mentioned. Later, in 1921 Letwaba and D.S. Mokwena were appointed the first black marriage officers in the AFM by the government for the areas of Transvaal and the Free State.<sup>195</sup>

Looking much further ahead, it should be noted in anticipation that one of Letwaba's greatest achievements was without doubt the Patmos Bible School. He started it in 1930.<sup>196</sup> With almost no financial help from the white mission, he built the bible school in answer to one of the most urgent needs of the black people at that time. Gordon Lindsay is right when he writes, "Today many thousands of

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<sup>194</sup>Comforter 1959. p. 8

<sup>195</sup>Comforter August 1921, p. 13

<sup>196</sup>Comforter January 1930, p. 7

graduates from the Patmos Bible School are teaching and preaching the Gospel throughout Africa.<sup>197</sup>

The well known English missionary William Burton, was so gripped by Letwaba's great work and history that he wrote about him in a book called When God Makes a Pastor.<sup>198</sup> In all probability Letwaba himself wrote a book, because the minutes of the White Executive Council meeting of May 18, 1945 mentions a loan to him for the publication of his book - 10 pounds repayable at 2 pounds per month. It is uncertain if the book was actually completed or published.

During the Workers Council meetings of the white church in March 1951, problems with the infiltration of wrong doctrines were mentioned. What the wrong doctrines were is not specifically mentioned, but Letwaba's name was mentioned as a strong wedge against these wrong teachings in the black church.<sup>199</sup> Letwaba's sentiments for white people is well represented in one of his last letters published in the Trooster,

...Nou op my laaste dae bid ek vir ons goeddoeners, die witmense, wat die Ewige Lig tot ons gebring het. My nasie moet leer om ons goeddoeners lief te hê... En hulle gehoorsaam wees, want buite die witman, was daar

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<sup>197</sup>Lindsay, op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>198</sup>Burton, William: When God Makes a Pastor. Clapham Park: Victory Press, 1934.

<sup>199</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, March 1951.



geen hemel vir ons arme swartes nie...<sup>200</sup>

Reports of Letwaba's ministry characterizes it as a ministry of power. Signs and wonders were just as much a part of it as it was of the ministry of Lake. Sister Dugmore, wife of the first missions superintendent under which Letwaba worked, wrote a biographical sketch of him in which she related,

On one occasion he went to have meetings for the natives on a white man's farm. When he arrived there he was told to sleep in the fowl-house. He said, 'Thank you, baas,' made a broom from twigs, and cleaned the place and went to sleep. At midnight he was awakened by the farmer who said, 'Wake up, Letwaba, my wife is desperately ill, come and pray for her.' He got up immediately and prayed for the woman, who was healed instantaneously. The farmer then told him to go and sleep in an outside room, and apologised for putting him in a fowl-house, but Letwaba said, 'It is all right, sir, to put me there, my Master<sup>201</sup> slept in a stable, and I am only a black worm.'

Letwaba was known for his linguistic abilities. He could speak and read many languages fluently: Sindebele, Afrikaans, English, German, Zulu, Sesotho, Tonga and Xhosa. In the Comforter of 1959 he is reported to have been the only black person to ever have been made an overseer of a black district.<sup>202</sup> This seems to be incorrect as the Comforter of 1913 mentions a certain Oliphant in the same

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<sup>200</sup>Letwaba, E.M.: Letter published in the Trooster, December 1953, p.16.

<sup>201</sup>Comforter June 1959

<sup>202</sup>Comforter, 1959, p.8

capacity.<sup>203</sup> However it was, Letwaba was overseer of the black district of Waterberg (Potgietersrus). Letwaba was also allowed to speak at white conferences by way of exception.

For the last two years of his 89, this great warrior of faith was almost totally blind. On March 21, 1959 he died and was buried at Naboomspruit by his former Superintendent of Missions, Pastor M.H. Wright, as was his last wish according to a letter written by Pastor C.J. Jacobs, missionary overseer of Northern Transvaal at the time of Letwaba's death.

#### **The Ministry of Healing and the use of medicine:**

Great emphasis is put on healing and supernatural signs and wonders by the Pentecostals. Nills Bloch-Hoell points out, "Faith in supernatural healing has always been an important part of the Pentecostal teaching in every country."<sup>204</sup>

The antipathy that blacks in the AFM felt against the use of western medicine probably came from the teachings they received on divine healing, firstly from the Zionist

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<sup>203</sup> Comforter 1913, p.57

<sup>204</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., p.147-148.

movement, but also from the early Pentecostals. Right from the start of "Zionism" in South Africa, and later on in Pentecostalism, the emphasis on "healing" was very attractive to blacks.<sup>205</sup> The AFM's attitude to the use of medicine can only be evaluated against their view of divine healing. In this regard they were in line with Pentecostals all over the world.

In the May 1911 edition of the Upper Room, a letter was published written by a sister Vera Barnard. She was one of a party of people evangelizing in the Orange River Colony. In her letter she claimed that,

in the morning, before even we rise, the sick, blind, etc., are brought to us. The demons have been cast out; and these signs should follow continually as in the Apostolic age.<sup>206</sup>

In the writings of these pioneers of the AFM numerous reports are documented of miraculous signs and wonders, especially healings that took place under their ministry.

From every quarter come continuous reports of conversions, of wonderful miracles of healing, and of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. In a recent conversation with some of the Brethren who are in the work at Louis Trichardt, we were told of the most remarkable manifestations of healing; the recovery of sight to the blind, healing of the totally deaf, of cripples and of disease-smitten people, that had taken place during a trip that the brothers made on foot from Louis Trichardt to Pietersburg, when the natives came in vast numbers to be prayed for. This

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<sup>205</sup> It is important to note that it also tied in into their culture.

<sup>206</sup> The Upper Room, 1911, p.6

demonstrates the wonderful possibility of native evangelization made possible through the ministry of healing.<sup>207</sup>

The following statement made in the Comforter underlines the importance attached to signs and wonders.

We feel free to assert, that no religious movement of modern times has left such an impression on the native mind, in so short a time as the Apostolic Faith Mission, and declare as our conviction that the ministry of healing through the power of God has been used by Him to attract the native, and demonstrates to him a living God, such as nothing else could have done.<sup>208</sup>

These statements also throw some light on their motives in searching for supernatural signs and wonders. As is the case usually with Pentecostals, healing was not looked upon as a spectacular end in itself, but rather as a means to an end.

R.H. van der Wall claims that 'The Paramount Chief of the Mavenda tribe, M'Pefu, who has hitherto refused the Missionaries to settle and labour amongst his people, has given an open door to the Apostolic Faith Mission. He has no doubt observed that our teaching embodies more than usual, that the Word of truth is substantiated by signs and wonders, that we preach the Christ who saves the soul, but also heals the body, as He ever did and still does. His tribe outnumbers the others by many thousands, and some have already accepted Christ and experienced his healing power.<sup>209</sup> What an opportunity! What an open door!

As editor of the Comforter, John G. Lake wrote about an incident in Letwaba's ministry.

A great drought had rested for a number of months over that section of the country. Bro. Letwaba was

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<sup>207</sup> Comforter, July/August 1911

<sup>208</sup> Ibid

<sup>209</sup> Comforter, 1911, p. 3

conducting meetings in one of the great native locations in the mountains. While preaching to a large concourse of native people the Lord caused him to prophesy that before the next morning there should be abundance of rain. He continued in prayer all night, apparently submerged in the Spirit, and was only aroused by the rain falling upon him. The incident so impressed the native people that the Chiefs called a thanksgiving meeting. The Holy Ghost fell mightily upon the people, with pungent conviction for sin. In writing of this Bro. Letwaba says, 'And hundreds were saved.'<sup>210</sup>

But the practice of praying for the sick did not always open doors for them. The missionary to Gwanda wrote:

Geliefden, de Naturelle Kommissaris hier is erg tegen ons gekant, of liever tegen het werk dat door de Apostolies Geloof Zending gedaan wordt, omdat, zoals hij zegt, wij zulk een dweperij verkondigen, bv. Goddelike Genezing.<sup>211</sup>

Tom Hezmalhalch wrote a letter to his wife, saying,

Tell Bro. Lehman I cannot leave here as yet. It is impossible for anyone to describe the work the dear Lord is doing here. It is such as I have never seen before. The stone blind get their sight, the stone deaf perfect hearing and the mutes able to hear and speak.<sup>212</sup>

The following are some of the basic theological themes that appear regularly in the Pentecostal messages on healing: healing and the atonement; the example of Christ

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<sup>210</sup>Comforter, 1912: p. 12

<sup>211</sup>Comforter, July 1921: p. 10

<sup>212</sup>Comforter, 1933: p. 10

and the early church; the gifts of the Spirit; and healing related to faith.<sup>213</sup>

It was believed that as salvation was purchased by the crucifixion of Jesus, physical healing was secured by His scourging, the prooftext being I Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree ... by whose stripes ye were healed."<sup>214</sup>

Pentecostals regularly use Hebrews 13:8 to support their belief in signs and wonders, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."<sup>215</sup>

Healing might come through laying on of hands, or by one having the "gifts of healing", anointing with oil by the elders, application of prayer handkerchiefs or simply by "the prayer of faith" of the individual believer.<sup>216</sup>

While speaking in tongues is more peculiar to Pentecostalism, praying for the healing of the sick is something that started long before the modern day Pentecostal Movement. Morton Kelsey refers to people like

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<sup>213</sup>Anderson, op. cit: p. 93.  
Bloch-Hoell, op. cit: p. 149  
Moller, 1975, op. cit: p. 222 - 223

<sup>214</sup>Anderson, op. cit: p. 93

<sup>215</sup>See also Is. 53:5; Matt. 8:16-17; Ex. 15:26; John 14:12 and James 5:15

<sup>216</sup>Mark 16:18; I Cor. 12:9; James 5:14 - 15;  
See also Bloch-Hoell, op. cit, p. 149,  
Anderson, op. cit., p. 93,  
Moller, 1975, op. cit., p. 223 - 224

Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Jerome, Bernard of Clairvaux and numerous others, who either experienced healing through prayer, or witnessed it during the patristic, medieval and reformation-modern historical periods.<sup>217</sup> People like Count von Zinzendorf, Johann Blumhardt, Boltzius, A.J. Gorden, A.B. Simpson, Dorothea Trundell, all also regularly prayed for the sick.<sup>218</sup>

One can understand the great emphasis placed upon healing by the early AFM leaders considering their ties with Dowie. John G. Lake was an elder of Zion City and P.L. Le Roux had been enthused with the teachings of Dowie via Buchler and Bryant.<sup>219</sup> Le Roux was also influenced by Andrew Murray, who wrote a book on the biblical message concerning Divine Healing.<sup>220</sup>

Pentecostals have never hesitated to speak out against exaggeration, distortion and untruths in the healing ministry. Donald Gee warned that

The popular healing campaigns have produced over the years such grave scandals that it will need all the courage and wisdom and humility that God can give.

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<sup>217</sup> Kelsey, Morton T.: Healing and Christianity. New York: Harper and Row, 1973, pp. 138-242.

<sup>218</sup> Moller, 1975, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>219</sup> Sundkler, op. cit., pp. 28, 34.

<sup>220</sup> Murray, Andrew: Jesus the Physician of the Sick. 1884.

Pentecostal leadership to cleanse them away.<sup>221</sup>

He also advised:

A purely physic (sic), and therefor natural healing experienced in a crowd will pass off as the suitable psychological conditions have ceased, or when the potency of auto-suggestion has run its course. A genuine miracle will remain and stand the test of time. We insist upon testing all evangelistic and 'deliverance' ministries by the inspired standards of the New Testament.<sup>222</sup>

One realises that most probably many of the healings and miracles reported by the early workers in the AFM could be exaggerated and could not stand up to scientific evaluation and testing. At this stage it will be difficult to prove them one way or the other. Nevertheless, the fact remains that their ministry and the accompanying miracles and healings seem to have made a great impact on the black community.

Ample proof in the form of written testimonies and other documentation exists about the effectiveness of the early AFM's ministry of divine healing.<sup>223</sup> A certain Mrs. Rennie wrote about her uncle who hired the old Bree street "Tabernacle" in the early 1920's :

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<sup>221</sup>Gee, Donald: "The Value of the Supernatural" in Pentecost. London. Dec. 1962 - Feb. 1963, p.17.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid, p. 17

<sup>223</sup>For more information about the doctrine and views of the AFM on Healing see:  
Burger, op. cit., pp.216-221; 299-309.



He had the place cleaned and renovated, and under the raised platform, in what had been used as the "Choir Hall" by the Zion Church congregation, but by the newly formed A.F. Mission as a store-room, he found dozens of such things as wheel-chairs, trusses, crutches and other appliances which had simply been left behind when people were healed under Bro. Lake's ministry - ample evidence<sup>224</sup> years later, of the way the Lord had worked.

Nils Bloch-Hoell says that:

The majority of Pentecostal followers would probably agree with the following statement by the Pentecostal Holiness Church : "In the atonement made by Christ, it believes that provision was made for the healing of the body, but it does not antagonize the practice of medicine as something essentially evil, emphasizing the claim that there is a more excellent way."<sup>225</sup>

He continues saying:

Some radical Pentecostals rather drastically reject all kinds of medical assistance : "Let the unbeliever, who knows not God and has not faith in Him, turn to the science of man; but to us who know God these things are a curse."

The early AFM, with its heavy emphasis on divine healing, clearly falls in the latter category by regarding it as a token of unbelief and sometimes even a sin to visit a doctor or use medicine. This was regarded as "trusting on the arm of flesh". Cases are known where the persons were willing to die, rather than to use medicine.

As die Here my nie gesondmaak nie, dan sterf ek maar. Maar ek sal steeds bly glo en bely dat die Here die Groot Geneesheer is.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup>Rennie, Mrs. Zoe: Typed report in the AFM Archive.

<sup>225</sup>Bloch-Hoell, Nils. op. cit., pp.149-150.

<sup>226</sup>Burger, op. cit., p.221.

P.L. le Roux stated emphatically in 1918:

Br. le Roux asked how God heals. Does He institute Doctors and tell us to go to them? No. Ex.15:26 - He says 'I am the Lord your Healer'.<sup>227</sup>

In line with their views on medicine, the white conference decided in 1939 that all forms of birth control were wrong and sinful:

Die uitwerking van hierdie vergadering was dat die konferensie eenparig besluit het dat 'Geboortebeperking' en die gebruik van voorbehoedmiddels onskriftuurlik en sondig is en dat ons mense moet geleer word om volgens die Woord van die Here gesond en rein te lewe.<sup>228</sup>

The antipathy against medicine was still held in 1940.<sup>229</sup> It is interesting to note that Le Roux, as well as Mission Superintendents Wright and Hawley had to resign from full-time service because of bad health. Could it be because they declined any medical assistance?

Understandably this viewpoint of the AFM brought them into conflict with the Government's new Public Health Act of 1919 that made inoculation mandatory. A note of protest was sent to the Government that the AFM,

cannot submit to compulsory vaccination or inoculation or use of medicines or drugs in any form it being an article of our faith that the Lord Jesus

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<sup>227</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council, 18/7/1918, p.207.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., May 1939, p.5.

<sup>229</sup> Trooster. April 1939, p.26.

Christ is our Healer.<sup>230</sup>

Although this was to no avail the law was changed in 1928 to accommodate conscientious objectors.<sup>231</sup> In 1943 a Memorandum of the AFM was submitted to the National Health Services Commission. While space does not permit the complete printing of it, the introductory paragraph will suffice:

We find not one word between the lids (sic) of the Bible in favour of Doctors, Surgeons and drugs. The Scriptural method of physical healing is Divine Healing. The quickest and the best for all ailments of the body as well as the soul. We conscientiously believe that if we use any means,<sup>232</sup> we grieve God and bring judgment upon ourselves.

Within the next decade this attitude of the AFM would be altered drastically, although there are still individuals that hold to the former views. Nowadays the white pastors are even compelled to belong to the AFM's Medical Aid.

#### Constitutional development of the ministry in the AFM:

On Tuesday March 2, 1909, something very important in the constitutional development of the ministry in the AFM happened. The first five recognized elders of the AFM were appointed.<sup>233</sup> On reading through the minutes, it becomes

<sup>230</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1/11/1918, p.245.

<sup>231</sup> For a complete overview of this conflict see: Burger, op. cit., pp.299-309.

<sup>232</sup> Copy of this Memorandum is available in the AFM's Archive.

<sup>233</sup> Minutes of Executive Council, 1909, p.29

quite clear that in the initial stages of ministerial development there were no full time clergy with the exception of Hesmalhalch and Lake, who were living completely in faith regarding their own support.

Certificates for spiritual workers were discussed at a meeting held on November 26, 1908 and a motion passed in this regard on December 3, 1908.<sup>234</sup> On January 28, 1909 it was resolved that certificates will be issued by the board of trustees only.<sup>235</sup>

The following resolution was the first to be taken in appointing official elders. It was adopted on March 2, 1909:

That Brothers Hesmalhalch, John G. Lake, J.O. Lehman, Van der Wall and Elliot are the five recognized Elders of the AFM.<sup>236</sup>

Another important resolution was also passed at that meeting: "That all other workers be recognized in 2 classes, viz:- Deacons and missionaries".<sup>237</sup>

From the minutes of a meeting held on May 27, 1909, the following was proposed and adopted:

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<sup>234</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1908, p.15.

<sup>235</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p.24.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid, p. 29

<sup>237</sup>Ibid, p. 29

The brethren present constitute themselves into a council of all the workers in active service for the Master, who teach the Gospel and maintain the same as set forth in the AFM. The workers shall retain full liberty in the Holy Ghost, independent of each other, each worker being acknowledged as the head of the work thus undertaken by him, with whom the other workers will cooperate if required.<sup>238</sup>

In answer to the question who would be acting for the whole council in the absence of the workers and in case urgent matters arise for treatment, the following resolution was passed:

That the council elect from its number an Executive Council consisting of a President, Vice-President, a Treasurer and Secretary and three other members, seven in all, to act on behalf of the General Council in any matters requiring expediency.<sup>239</sup>

An historic election was held and the first Executive Committee appointed:

President: Tom Hezmalhalch

Vice-President: John G. Lake

Treasurer: H. M. Turney

Secretary: J. H. L. Schumann

Members: Brothers Lehman, Van der Wall, Elliott.

Since 1909 some work was done from time to time on the constitution of the AFM. On October 4, 1912, the matter

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<sup>238</sup>Ibid, p. 34

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

finally seemed to come to a culmination for the minutes read:

The rules and regulations of the Apostolic Faith Mission are read and explained, both in Dutch and English, being taken clause by clause. After full discussion and explanations in answer to questions from the brethren present, it was proposed by brother Saunders, seconded by brother Moodie, 'That these rules be adopted in their entirety.' Unanimously adopted.<sup>240</sup>

This Constitution formed the basis for the Articles and Memorandum of Association of the AFM, lodged with the Registrar of Companies in 1913.<sup>241</sup>

The subject of ministry is treated under the heading, "Members". The appropriate section of Article 5 reads as follows:

5. Members shall be one or other of the following classes, viz: Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Evangelists, Missionaries, Workers or ordinary members as hereinafter defined or described or any other office which may be from time to time created in general conference, viz:

- A. PASTORS.....
- B. ELDERS.....
- C. EVANGELISTS.....
- D. DEACONS.....
- E. MISSIONARIES shall be such persons being members of the Society. a) as held that office immediately prior to its constitution hereunder, b) as shall hereafter present certificates of credentials to that effect from any other properly constituted Christian body and shall be recognized as such, and c) as shall hereafter be appointed as such.

They shall endeavour to spread the teaching of the Apostolic Faith in such parts of South Africa and elsewhere as have no Pastor or Elder in charge and as

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<sup>240</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1912, p.99.

<sup>241</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1913, p.109.

may be respectively assigned to them from time to time  
as their field of operation.<sup>242</sup>  
F. WORKERS.....

It is interesting to find "Missionaries" among these ministries. Their duties are listed as preaching and spreading the Apostolic Faith, much the same as that of the apostles in the New Testament. No clear indication is given to whom these missionaries were to go and if they were to limit their ministry to heathen groups within the population. Both men and women could be certified.

Almost forty years later, on April 5, 1946 the whole system of certification was altered altogether and a change was also made to the Constitution regarding the Church's ministry. This more or less introduced a second stage in the AFM's ministry. A comparison of this amended Constitution with the first Constitution regarding the ministries, makes clear how the AFM changed over the years.<sup>243</sup> A distinction is now visible between the profesional clergy (fulltime workers) and the laity, and the problem of women workers seems to be sorted out, for one finds both women workers (fulltime) and deaconesses (laity).

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<sup>242</sup> Articles of Association of the Apostolic Faith  
Mission of South Africa, Part one, the Constitution, pp.4-7.

<sup>243</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, p.2804.

The role of women workers in the ministry of the AFM warrants further comment. David du Plessis argues that on the day of Pentecost, Jesus "baptized the women exactly like the men, and I say for the exact same purpose as the men are baptized so the women are baptized".<sup>244</sup> Yet writing about the role of women in Pentecostalism, Hollenweger remarked:

the Pentecostal theory about women and the actual roles which women play in the Pentecostal movement are not so easy to reconcile.<sup>245</sup>

Hollenweger then explains this statement by distinguishing between three types of women that are of particular importance in the Pentecostal movement. They are the "prophetess" type, the "pastor's wife", and the "woman with theatrical talents". This last category does not include the many Pentecostal women missionaries, woman pastors, or women evangelists. Examples are women like Aimee Semple McPherson, Lillian Trasher, Anna Larsen Bjorner, South Africa's Maria Fraser, the founder of the rigorist Latter Rain movement, and Johanna Nxumalo a princess from Swaziland.<sup>246</sup> Hollenweger's conclusion is that these women provide a remarkable contrast to the Pentecostal theory of the subordination of women.

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<sup>244</sup>Robeck, Cecil M., Jr., (Ed.): Theology, News and Notes, Vol.30, No.1, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983, p.6.

<sup>245</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.486.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid., p.488.



Woman workers formed an important part of the AFM's task force during the early years. Grant McClung believes that a large part of the dynamic growth of the Pentecostal Movement is due to its ability since its inception to mobilize and effectively deploy women into missionary service.<sup>247</sup> We regularly read of white women in the AFM that were ordained for fulltime work.<sup>248</sup> In 1921 we find a certain Sister Turney supervising the black work of the Pentecostal Assemblies of America in the Transvaal region with the help of a Miss James. A problem arose when the white male Native Commissioner in Middelburg, Transvaal, ruled that such female supervision was illegal. The Blacks then turned to the AFM for help as she insisted on remaining supervisor.<sup>249</sup> Yet in 1937 a recommendation of the Workers Council was accepted: "Discouraging custom of electing sisters on committee."<sup>250</sup> Unfortunately the name of the committee was not stated.

Ten years later, in 1947, the widow of a former missions Superintendent Sis. Dugmore, and Sis. Williams were

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<sup>247</sup> McClung, L. Grant: Azusa Street and Beyond. South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishers, 1986, p.76.

<sup>248</sup> See: Minutes of the Executive Council: 20/7/1919; Comforter, May/June 1924 etc.

<sup>249</sup> Comforter, August 1921, p.6.

<sup>250</sup> Minutes of Workers Council, 29/3/1937.

appointed to minister among the black women in South Africa.<sup>251</sup> In time to come the ordination of women workers was stopped altogether. Although women workers are presently allowed to minister in a limited way, they are still not being ordained.

Not much is documented about black women in ministry. All one finds is that there were "Class leaders" or so-called "prayer women". In 1910 a resolution was passed by the white Executive Council allowing black women as local preachers. In that capacity they could also be ordained.<sup>252</sup> It is questionable whether any black woman worker was actually ever ordained as no documentation to support this could be found.<sup>253</sup> According to Gschwend, resistance against women preachers existed amongst the blacks in the AFM in Africa.<sup>254</sup> However, this is not to imply that the influence of the women laity and prayer leaders was insignificant. Martin West's description of the influence of women in the AIC's, is almost identical to the situation in the AFM in Africa:

...it should be pointed out that while women are in the majority in the independant churches they are rarely in

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<sup>251</sup>Ibid., December 1947, p.2.

<sup>252</sup>Executive Council Minutes, 1910.

<sup>253</sup>Edgar Gschwend, present Director of Missions supports this statement. Interview in Kempton Park, 2/10/88.

<sup>254</sup>Ibid.

positions of direct authority except in their manyang groups. Their influence, however, is considerable.<sup>255</sup>

According to West the women would exert their influence by strongly influencing the leaders. The "blue frock" struggle in the AFM in Africa during the forties is a good example of this.<sup>256</sup> Although it was the women that were involved in the fallacy, the male dominated leadership had a hard time to discipline and correct them because of the women's powerful influence in the local assemblies.<sup>257</sup> Resolved on the motion of Bro. Pieterse seconded by Bro. Johnson that:

we strongly condemn the wearing of a special frock by the Class Leaders, (prayer women) in the Mission and that we do all within in (sic) Christian reason to stop this custom among the Prayer Women.<sup>258</sup>

It literally took decades to purge the AFM in Africa of this custom.

#### The Leadership of P.L. le Roux:

We have already referred to the prominent role that P.L. Le Roux played in the history of Christian Zionism in

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<sup>255</sup>West, Martin: Bishops and Prophets in a Black City. Cape Town: David Philip, 1975, p.51.

<sup>256</sup>The whole issue centered around the question whether the prayer-women could be allowed to wear a blue frock at their meetings. Because they attached special "spiritual" importance to the blue frock the AFM declared this illegal.

<sup>257</sup>Etlike Hoofmomente in die Geskiedenis van die Swart-Afdeling van die AGS van SA. Paper distributed by the AFM's mission department, 1983, p.4.

<sup>258</sup>Minutes of Missionary Conference, April 1943, p.2507.

South Africa. He was also one of the key leaders of the AFM and played a very significant and important role especially in the formation and developement of both white and black sections of the AFM.

Almost right at the beginning when Lake and Hesmalhalch started their ministry in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, Le Roux drove the two hundred miles to get there and attend the services. When he saw what was happening to the people, many of whom he knew personally, he realized that what they were experiencing was genuinely from God.<sup>259</sup> Although he still worked as missionary for the Zion Church for a time, he joined the AFM in 1908. After he joined the AFM he remained in Wakkerstroom as Missionary for the AFM.<sup>260</sup> In the minutes of the Executive Council of February 25, 1910, we read that Le Roux was nominated as member of the Executive Council. On October 1, 1912, he was elected Secretary of the Council. It was during his term as secretary that the first official Constitution of the AFM was drafted and later in 1913 formally registered. There is no doubt that Le Roux played an important role in the formulation of the Constitution.

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<sup>259</sup>Le Roux, P.L.: "25 Jaar van Pinkster in Suid Afrika." in the Trooster, May 1933, p.1.

<sup>260</sup>Burger, op. cit., p.279.

On November 11, 1913 he was appointed as White Superintendent of the "Native Work" and also as editor of the Comforter/De Trooster.<sup>261</sup>

At heart he was always a missionary. For many years he was Superintendent of the Missionary Work as well as President of the European Section. Besides this he never gave up the overseership of the Native Work in the Eastern Transvaal. Tens of thousands of Natives and Europeans therefore claim him as Spiritual father.<sup>262</sup> It was only in 1929 that Le Roux resigned the superintendency and was succeeded by A.W. Preller on March 29, 1929.<sup>263</sup>

On November 13, 1913, after the return of Lake to the USA, P.L. le Roux was elected President of the AFM. He remained in this office for thirty years until 1943. Insofar as his leadership as President of the church was concerned, David du Plessis notes that like his teacher, Andrew Murray, "Brother le Roux wielded a tremendous influence over God's people"<sup>264</sup>. Le Roux valued the training of ministers highly and more than anybody realised the lack of it amongst the early workers of the AFM. At a meeting of the Executive Council held on July 28, 1920, the need was expressed that biblical training for black workers should be investigated.

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<sup>261</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1913.

<sup>262</sup> Comforter, 11/11/1913, p.3.

<sup>263</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1929.

<sup>264</sup> Comforter, Nov. 1913, p.3.

Although a lengthy discussion followed, nothing came of it.<sup>265</sup> In the minutes of the Executive Council of April 12, 1927, Le Roux emphasised the importance of a Bible School for young men and women. On December 18, 1929 a certain Henrietta Fruen was appointed the first principal of the newly instituted college<sup>266</sup>. However, this was only a training centre for whites. The first training centre for blacks was to follow much later.

During the Workers Council meetings of 1930, Le Roux proposed the introduction of a Pension Fund for workers. He apparently was "Editeur" (Editor) of the Comforter/Trooster until April 1933. Under his presidency he had the privilege to open the first orphanage on April 10, 1938 at 20 St. Goddard Street, Mayfair West. On June 9, 1940 he opened the Bible School again after it had been closed down for a few years.<sup>267</sup> The minutes of the Executive Council show that Le Roux was earning the princely sum of 40 pounds per month plus allowances of 10 pounds per month in 1942.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1920, pp.408; 422-424.

<sup>266</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1929, p. 1136.

<sup>267</sup> Comforter June/July 1940.

<sup>268</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, November 18, 1942.

In the Comforter of March 1943 all the believers were asked to dedicate April 11, 1943 as a special day of prayer for the restoration of the health of President Le Roux. On May 22, 1943 the Le Rouxs celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary together with their 6 sons, 2 daughters and 21 grandchildren. At a special Executive Council meeting on April 24, 1943 P.L. le Roux resigned as President due to his deteriorating health. It was duly decided to make him honorary president for life with an allowance of 40 pounds per month and 5 pounds "car allowance" plus 5 pounds "cost of living" allowance. On April 24, 1943 G. Vermeulen was elected the new president, with Gerrie Wessels (later senator) as vice-president, and David du Plessis as secretary.<sup>269</sup>

On July 5, 1943 P.L. le Roux died of a stroke at the age of 78. A motion was passed on April 12, 1944 that the Executive Council would pay all costs concerning the funeral and would grant 500 pounds to his widow. On August 6, 1956 she also died. Sundkler testifies about the statesmanship of Le Roux saying,

It was largely due to his leadership as President of the Apostolic Faith Mission that the sound development of that White Pentecostal movement was due. All this goes to prove that P. L. le Roux has a place in South African church history.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>269</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 24/4/1943.

<sup>270</sup>Sundkler, op. cit. p. 67

## 2. The Development of the AFM in Africa

### The Missionary Policy of the AFM

Although there was a big lack of financial resources for missionary work during the initial years, a vision to expand their missionary horizon definitely existed.

It shall be made known to the congregation on the Lord's day Evening, March 7, 1909 that there is a very urgent need of money for the support and maintenance<sup>271</sup> and sending out of new missionaries into the field.

In the minutes of the white Executive Council meeting of May 6, 1910 we read, "Brother le Roux hands in certain Resolutions passed at the conference of Natives held at Bloemfontein on April 8, 1910". Before we look at the specific resolutions, a comment about the "conference" is necessary. In reading the history of the AFM in Africa, it becomes clear that the holding of conferences was something very important. In the formulated policy later, it was decided that at least one national annual conference should be held, while overseers should organize a conference annually for their own districts. For clarity's sake, it must be mentioned that the white and black churches held their annual conferences separately. According to interviews with various old former white missionaries and also the present Director of Missions of the AFM, Pastor Edgar

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<sup>271</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p.29.



Gschwend, they regarded the conferences as very important for the following reasons:

1. It was an ideal opportunity for some sound teaching and further training, because most of the workers were totally untrained.

2. It was a good opportunity to put heresies, or what could become doctrinal heresies, right because most of the workers would be present.

3. With all workers present, it was an ideal opportunity to discuss matters of importance.

4. Initially, they also used the time of the conference for their annual business meeting. Later on the conference (held in the evenings) was combined with the annual business meeting, also called, the "Workers Council" (held during the day).

5. It reinforced and demonstrated the unity of the church.

There are two additional reasons why they put such emphasis on the conferences. Firstly, the Pentecostal way of worship and singing is best enjoyed in a big crowd. Secondly, we must remember that most of the early assemblies were small as well as persecuted and humiliated by the mainline churches. Being together as a big crowd left them with the feeling that they were not only a part of a small congregation, but also members of a big, powerful

denomination. Psychologically speaking, this had a positive effect on them.

The resolutions passed at the conference on April 8, 1910 embodied the first officially documented missionary policy of the AFM. What makes this policy statement so important, is that it formed the basis on which all future policies would be built. According to the minutes,

These resolutions are accepted by the Council as amended and subject to such revision as may be from time to time deemed necessary. Copy thereof is as follows:

1. That the work amongst the Natives for the time being be conducted by a "Native Council" consisting of three European Members (Brs. J.G. Lake, P.L. le Roux, T. Schwede) assisted by three Native overseers (the Brs. Mowane, Letwaba and A. Oliphant).
2. Any person desiring to enter into the fellowship of the Apost. Faith Mission as a worker will apply to the Native Council, which body shall refer its decision to the Executive Council for final ratification.
3. The work shall be carried on by means of
  - a) Local Preachers, who have the power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick and bury the dead.
  - b) Deacons, who have power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick, bury the dead and consecrate little children.
  - c) Elders, who have power to preach the Gospel, lay hands on the sick, bury the dead and consecrate little children, administer the Lord's Supper and baptize believers.
  - d) Overseers, who in addition to all the foregoing, have power to perform marriages, exercise discipline and to ordain ministers subject to the approval of the Executive Council.
 Elders and overseers are considered ministers.
4. Local preachers shall receive ordination by laying on of hands, which may be performed by the Elder by consent of the Executive Council. Woman workers shall be admitted as local preachers and receive a similar ordination.
5. Every church member in good standing and especially those who have received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, shall be encouraged to take a share in the work by witnessing of what God has done to their souls.
6. In support of our Ministers, we follow the lines

laid down in the Word of God. Funds shall be raised by means of tithes and offerings. Our native church is not expected to keep the European Ministers who labour in our midst, but the native workers are supported wholly from this source.

7. The decision of the Native Council are subject to<sup>272</sup> revision by the Executive Council of Johannesburg.

As P.L. le Roux was part of the Native conference that formulated this policy and as he also presented it to the Executive Council, it seems safe to assume that he had the bigger part in its formulation.

The paternalistic approach to missions by the AFM is clearly demonstrated in the fact that the Native Council consisted of 50% whites to assist the 50% blacks. The fact that every decision of the Native Council had to be confirmed by the white Executive Council, confirms this conclusion. Probably due to Le Roux's influence, it is clear that the AFM followed the NGK in accepting Henry Venn's view that independence of the indigenous church can only be attained as the end result of a process of development.<sup>273</sup> Following in the line of Venn and the NGK the white missionaries, and especially the white Executive Council, set themselves in the position of guardians over the Black Church during its development, until such time as they reached maturity and could then be regarded as independent.

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<sup>272</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1910.

<sup>273</sup> Adonis, op. cit., p.225.

More will later be said about the effectiveness of this particular missiological strategy.

In regard to the workers, it is interesting to note that

1) There were different classes (as far as status was concerned), of workers. This is demonstrated by the different job descriptions.

2) Nothing is mentioned of the office of "pastor". Probably Elders and Overseers who were considered "ministers", fulfilled the role of pastors, although it seems that Local Preachers also did the work of Pastors.

3) Although there is no biblical evidence to support them, differentiation was made in this policy in what each worker was allowed to do.

4) It is interesting to note that women were allowed as Local Preachers and were even ordained as such.

5) The office of Missionary is not even mentioned. In other words, God only calls white missionaries and not black missionaries.

6) There is no indication that certain offices could be filled only by full-time, paid professionals. Lake confirms this in a letter he wrote to the "Upper Room", saying, "I

have encouraged our workers wherever possible, to find employment and maintain themselves and their families."<sup>274</sup> Resolution 6 however, indicates that the tithes and offerings were used to support the black workers financially.

Right from the birth of the AFM one of its outstanding characteristics was the significant role that the laity played in the ministerial offices. In his study of the ministry in the AFM, Langerman remarked:

...the first members of the AFM held a dim view of all professional church leaders. The result of this attitude was that the ministerial leadership in the newly formed Pentecostal church was organized along the New Testament concept of voluntary ministry of the whole body of Christ.<sup>275</sup>

In a general overview of the development of missions in the AFM, J.W. Gillingham (Mission Superintendent) contributed the fast growth to the important role that lay workers played in the history of the Church.<sup>276</sup>

Toe God Suid-Afrika besoek het met die Pinkster uitstorting van die laat reën in 1906 het beide blank sowel as nie-blanke die seën ontvang. Almal wat tot bekering gekom en met die Heilige Gees gedoop was, het 'Sendelinge' geword in hulle eie omgewing. Dit het die vinnige groei van die werk teweeggebring.

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<sup>274</sup>The Upper Room, 1911, p. 6

<sup>275</sup>Langerman, op. cit., p.83.

<sup>276</sup>Trooster, Mei 1955, p.10.

In the first three decades of the AFM's existence lay leadership played a very significant role in the growth and organizational structure and development. But from the later thirties a sharp increase in the full-time pastorate was experienced and subsequently this led to a gradual decline in the participation and functionality of the laity. It was only in 1946, when the whole system of certification was altered altogether and a change was made to the Constitution regarding the AFM's ministry that a distinction became clear between "professional clergy" and the laity.<sup>277</sup> The following statistics underscore the important role the laity fulfilled during the early period:

An analysis of the minute books for the period September 17, 1908 to February 28, 1936 shows that only 67 fulltime pastors were appointed, but that an amount of 332 laity, both men and women, were certified for ministry.<sup>278</sup>

After the constitutional changes in 1946 the distinction between clergy and laity became quite obvious and the full-time pastor was well on the road to full recognition of his status. This was the situation in the white AFM.

No resolution in this regard was taken at that time about the AFM in Africa. Because they always followed

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<sup>277</sup> AFM of South Africa. Articles of Association 1913 and Amendmends. Lyndhurst, 1913, 1939, 1946. Available at the AFM Archive.

<sup>278</sup> Langerman, op. cit., p.103.

closely in the tracks of the white AFM, they probably followed suit. However, in practice the gap between the full-time clergy and the laity would never become so big as in the case with the white church. Resolution 6, indicates that tithes and offerings were used to support the black workers financially. This supports my view that at least some of the black pastors and white overseers could have been fulltime ministers

Apparently the 1910 resolutions concerning workers caused some problems because in 1915 they were amended as follows:

That in future no Elder or Evangelist shall be ordained or expelled by Native Overseers except in open conference, and in the presence and with the approval of the European Supt. of the Native work or his duly appointed representatives.

b. That no Deacon or Local Preacher shall be ordained by Overseers or Elders without first obtaining the consent of the European Superintendent.

The following resolutions moved by Bro. Dugmore, seconded by Bro. Moffat are also adopted.

1) That no minister or worker shall be received by an overseer or Elder except with the consent of the Overseer or Elder under whom he has been working, and always subject to the approval of the European Superintendent.

2) Whereas it is reported to the Council that certain certificates have been issued by Native Overseers; such practice is declared to be illegal and highly reprehensible. <sup>279</sup>

In De Trooster (Comforter) of March 1919, the new "Naturelle Gedraglijn"<sup>280</sup> was published. This document represented the AFM's mission's policy in 1919. Summarily, it dealt with issues such as the appointment of the white mission Superintendent, the policy of the appointing and ordination of black workers, and the responsibilities of the white overseers. These were to establish the work in their districts, organise an annual conference, develop lay preachers and evangelists, and to start a regional Bible School. The need for a central Bible School was also mentioned.

Great emphasis was placed on the correct procedure for the ordination of workers. It confirms a suspicion that they had problems with their totally untrained workers. Later the precise nature of these problems will be discussed. According to point 18 of the "Gedraglijn", they already at this early stage realized the desperate need for formal training. From point 19 one has to conclude that the government stated some requirements concerning the ministerial garb.

In the same Trooster it was mentioned that the country was divided into the following districts:

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<sup>280</sup> See appendix 1. Document available in the AFM's archive, Lyndhurst, Johannesburg.



Distrikt 1. Zuidoost Transvaal, Natal, Zululand en Swaziland. Overziener, Bro. P.L. le Roux  
 Distrikt 2. Witwatersrand en Omstreken. Overziener, Bro. W.F. Dugmore.  
 Distrikt 3. Waterberg en Pietersburg. Overziener, Bro. E.M. Letwaba.  
 Distrikt 4. Noordelik Zoutpansberg. Overziener, Bro. G.J. Booysen.  
 Distrikt 5, Pelgrimsrust. Overziener, Bro. D.H. Booysen.<sup>281</sup>

The Orange Free State is not mentioned in the districts because there was no able overseer available for the supervision of missionary work there.

In the same Comforter of 1919, definite guidelines were published as to the behaviour of white missionaries:

#### VOORSCHRIFTEN AAN ONZE ZENDELINGEN

‘Vervult mijne blijdschap, dat gij moogt eensgezind zijn, dezelfde liefde hebbende van een gemoed, en een gevoelen zijnde.’ - Filip. 2:2.

1. Tenzij gij tenvolle verlost zijt van alle kleur vooroordeel, waag het nooit als Zending naar de heidenen te gaan. In’t kort, onze verhouding moet als volgt zijn, dat hoewel wij het huwen van blanken met gekleurden ten sterkste veroordeelen, toch erkennen wij volkomen Geestelijke gelijkheid in het oog van God, en alle kleuren staan als broeders in Christus; een familie in God.

2. Vestig uzelfven moedig als zamestellende en opbouwende gedragslijn in het oprichten van kerken en scholen en it’t verkrijgen van goede onderwijzers. Een misslag in deze zal u brandmerken als onbekwaam, waardoor gij alle vertrouwen zult verliezen van hen die gij hadt moeten leiden. Onderhoud de hartelijke band van medegevoel tusschen uzelfven en de menschen.

3. Onthoud u roeping is niet slechts dat van prediker, maar ook dat van vaderlijke gids en leidsman in de moeilijke overgangs tijdperk van uit het heidendom tot de nieuwe christelijke condities. In de heidensche condities hebben gewoonte en bijgeloof en zekere mate van terughoudenden dwang uitgeoefend. Hun

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<sup>281</sup> Comforter, 1919: p. 3

overgang tot, en realiseren van, wat wij noemen 'de vrijheid van den onderdaan' konstitueert een meest moeilijke en gevaarlijke periode (tijd). Sterke bijbelsche bakens moeten opgehaald worden als regels voor moreel en algemeen gedrag, en bovenal moet persoonlijke sympathetische toezicht en leiding gegeven worden.

4. (a) Preek met onverschrokken moed tegenen de geliefkoosde zonden onzedelijkheid, leugentaal en dieverij.

(b) Maak elk lidmaat een actieve werker.

(c) Voorzie in ruime mate goede, reine geestelijke oefeningen speciaal in zingklassen voor de eenvoudigen.

5. Verkrijg in het bestier van zaken de samenwerking van de Leeraars en predikers en verzeker hunne ondersteuning in alle nieuwe maatregelen, alvorens gij die aan de menschen bestelt. Verkrijg hiernevens ook de stem van de gemeente.

6. Handel gelijk als in artikel 5 met alle zaken betrekking hebbende op aanstellingen en tucht. Geen toevlugt mag genomen worden tot eigenmatige handeling, tenzij het geval eenen bijzonder ernstige is.

7. Wees zeer standvastig met de dwalenden doch nimmer scherp of onnodig streng. Vergun de grootst mogelijke vrijheid aan diegenen, die bewezen hebben waar en standvastig te zijn. Dien beide lof en bestraffing toe.

8. Rigt op model kralen bij alle staties of gevestigde standplaatsen of buiten staties, maakt ook vruchten en groente tuinen alsmede boom plantaties, alsook verbeteringen van huizen en huisraad. Moedig de bekeerden aan dit na te doen. De vermenigvuldiging van behoeften spoort aan tot meerder nijverheid en allen zullen de gewoonte van werken verkrijgen.

9. Houd altoos in gedachte, dat de Zending bestaat tot voordeel van de menschen, niet de menschen tot voordeel van de Zending.

10. (a) Zet een goed moreel voorbeeld in hunne plaatselijke samenleving. Niet as geveind maar zuiver een eerlijk. (b) Behoud een reputasie (standing) die u instaat zal stellen hen bij de overheid met eer te vertegenwoordigen.

11. Wees geduldig onder wederwaardigheden, wanneer opschudding plaats vindt en velen door valsche broeders worden weggeleid. Wees standvastig, bezadigd, en geduldig. De tijd sal hen oorwinnen en uw invloed vermeerderen. Raporteer niet in overhast zulke gevallen aan de overheid.

12. Moedig de geest van herleving aan door nieuwe predikers uit te nodigen, blanken zoowel als inboorlingen. Voorkom alle tweedracht door zulke predikers zelf door heel uw district te begeleiden.

13. Heb een warmen welkom voor de naar huis

terugkerende predikers van de mijnen. Geef hen bepaald werk om te doen. Hebben zij van de Superintendent te Johannesburg geen brief gebrecht, schrijf en doe onderzoek aangaande zodanigen.

14. Wanneer gij besluit een konferensie te houden doe zulks in consultasie met de Zending Commissie, zoo dat degelijke kooperasie en harmonische samenwerking doorgans verzekerd zij.

15. Introduceer geen nieuwe leer en geef ook geen verlof tot de introductie van vreemde leringen. Als zaken zich in een nieuwe licht aan u vertonen, neem dan de Zending Kommissie in uw vertrouwen en plaats uzelf in hare handen. Denk er aan dat gij arbeidt als de vertegenwoordiger van een lichaam van gelovigen, en gewone eerlijkheid eischt dat geen nieuwe afwijking zal worden gemaakt, tensij gij verzekerd zijt, dat gij ook in dat geval, naar waarheid uwe broederen vertegenwoordigt.

16. Registreer alle vaste eigendommen van de Zending in de naam van de Zending volgens het neergelegde in de Constitutie, dat de tijdelijk staande vier Uitvoerende ambtenaren de trustees (gemachtigden) zijn van de Zending. Zij zijn: de President, de vice-President, de Sekretaris, en de Thesaurier, die alle dokumenten moeten tekenen.

17. Houd een register van alle losse eigendommen en levende have (vee) van de Zending. Dit behoort ten alle tijde in bereik te zijn voor inspeksie. Het zou goed zijn (sic) nog een aparte register te houden van alle eigendommen, die de Zendeling persoonlijk toebehoren.

18. Moedig geen leegloperij aan op of nabij de Statie en buitenstaties. Vermijd alle mogelijke verwarring.

19. Ontmoedig alle veroordelende aan spraken, tegen andere kerken of zekten gericht. Leer predikers en gelovigen andere Protestantsche kerken te respekteren. Verkondig de waarheid in alle liefde.

20. In elken gemeente moet opgaaf gehouden worden van alle gelden, bijgedragen en uitbetaald."

One would assume that point 1 would automatically be true of each missionary and that it would not even be necessary to mention it. It is a pity that this admonition was only given to the missionaries and not to all members and workers of the AFM. It seems a neglect of the prophetic calling of the church. It is of course probable that they did not see it in

this light, for the paternalistic view that the whites held towards the blacks is clearly evident in point 3.

"Onthoud u roeping... ook dat van vaderlijke gids en leidsman in de moeilijke overgangs tydperk van <sup>282</sup>het heidendom tot de nieuwe christelijke condities.

Insofar as the administration of finances was concerned, the following was decided:

1) Dat twee of drie lekebroers in elke Gemeente in beheer van de finantieen geplaats worden. 2) Dat zij de prediker zullen helpen om gehoorzaamheid in het geven van tienden te onderwijzen. 3) Dat zij de gaven van Gods volk zullen ontvangen en naawkeurig opteken. 4) Dat zij alle gaven overhandigen zullen aan de opziener van hun distrikt en hem bekend maken met de behoeften van hun prediker en gemeente. De opziener zal verantwoordelik zijn voor het aanwenden van de fondsen, het oog houden op de behoeften van predikers, voor zijn eigen behoefte, voornamelik reisgeld en het verminderen van de schuld op de Centrale Naturelle Tabernakel. De opziener zal ook duidelik rekenschap houden van zulke fondsen welke aantekeningen nagezien moeten worden door de Superintendent wanneer hij het distrikt bezoekt. Ook werde hartelik ingestem met Klausule 15 van 'Onze Naturelle Gedraglijn' <sup>283</sup>

It is interesting to note that none of the finances raised in the local assembly could initially be kept. All of it had to be handed over to the overseer, who then reimbursed them according to their need. On the positive side this meant that bigger, more affluent assemblies helped to subsidize the smaller ones. The negative side of this was that it made

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<sup>282</sup> Comforter, 1919, p.4.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

all the assemblies totally dependent on an overseer who had the responsibility of dividing and administering the funds as he saw fit.

By 1937 the Executive Council apparently felt that the existing missionary policy was inadequate. Hence Bros. Preller and Wright were instructed to draw up a proper missionary policy and submit it for the consideration of the Executive Council (white).<sup>284</sup> On December 31, 1941 the white Executive Council decided to add to their missionary policy, that only overseers be appointed marriage officers of the Natives<sup>285</sup>. What exactly motivated this decision is unfortunately not documented.

The minutes of the missionary conference held at 7 De Villiers Street in Johannesburg from April 8 to 10, 1943, reflects the following important amendments to the previous financial policy.

Resolved on the motion of Bro. Flewelling seconded Bro. Teichert that the system of taking tithes from Native members and issuing receipts for the same be approved further that these funds be centralised in each district and be under the Contr. of the District Overseer with a Native Committee which will pay the salaries of Native Ministers from the accumulated funds. All such moneys are to be sent direct from local Treasurers to the District Treasurer and not via

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<sup>284</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 19/2/1937.  
The 1946 "Handbook for the Native Section" was probably the result of this decision.

<sup>285</sup>Ibid. 31/12/1941.

Ministers or presiding Ministers. All moneys are to be banked in the name of the Mission and paid out by cheque only. One tenth of the tithes so collected should be sent to the General treasurer to support the Native Ministers Pension Fund. All in favour.

Also decided at this meeting, was,

that we delete the clause in connection with clerical collars and waistcoats in the policy and say nothing about the matter but agree amongst ourselves to discourage the wearing of all clerical garb by Native Ministers. Majority in favour.

Regarding special clothing for the Class Leaders (prayer women),

that we strongly condemn the wearing of a special frock by the Class leaders, (prayer women) in the Mission and that we do all within Christian reason to stop this custom among the Prayer Women. All in favour.

As far as European lay preachers were concerned, the following was decided:

a. That no European Worker shall be appointed as a Lay Worker or Evangelist among the Native unless he has been recommended by the local board and the District Council in which he resides.

b. After appointment such Worker must work under the supervision of the District Overseer and under the discipline of his local board, who shall be responsible for his conduct and shall recommend the annual renewal of his Certificate after they had received the approval of the District Overseer for such worker to continue in the Native Department.

c. Such Workers shall not exercise their authority to administer Sacraments unless specially instructed to do so by the District Overseer, otherwise he must get Native Ministers to administer the Sacraments.

d. Such workers must work in very close co-operation with the local Native Ministers and Evangelists and must not over-rule them in their authority in the Native Church.

e. Such workers must pay their tithes into the Treasury of the local European Assemblies who shall have the

right to assist them financially if necessary without withholding their regularly (sic) Missionary offering and they shall make regular reports of their work to their local committees. All in favour.

In 1946 the new statutes regarding missionary work appeared in the memorandum of Association and was published in the Comforter. Regarding missionary policy it states in connection with "Organization":

65 (a) The General Workers' Council shall, subject to the provision laid down in Article 2, have full power and authority to determine the Missionary Policies of the Mission and to create and establish such organization as may be required from time to time to effectively promote the aims and objects of the Mission in the Mission fields.

#### MISSIONARY COUNCIL

(b) A Council of Missionaries from all Mission fields, presided over by the Superintendent of Missionary work, shall be convened annually for the purpose of discussing matters concerning the work in the Missionary Departments and advising the Executive Council and General Workers' Council on Missionary matters, referred to in Article 2 hereof.

#### PROPERTIES AND FUNDS

(c) All properties acquired for the use of the Indian, Coloured and Bantu communities, shall be held in trust for each community by the Executive Council through the Trustees of the Mission and such properties shall not be disposed of or transferred from one community to another, unless with the consent of the Executive Council. Any funds collected by the said communities or derived from the sale of their properties shall be held in trust for the community concerned by the Executive Council.

In that same year the AFM published what they called the "Handbook for the Native Section"<sup>286</sup>. In it they dealt comprehensively with three sections, namely The Doctrines, Scriptural Discipline and Policy. This comprehensive policy, although amended in regard to small details in later years, was used until its revision in the 60's. Its importance requires that we set it out fully as follows:

#### POLICY

1. That the appointments in the Native Work shall be as follows: The European Superintendent and his assistant or assistants who shall exercise the general supervision of the work. Overseers, who shall be appointed to the oversight of certain districts and shall be responsible to the General Superintendent or his Assistants. Ministers, Evangelists, Deacons, Local Preachers and Class Leaders who shall carry on the work in the various assemblies and be responsible to the Overseers, or if their Assemblies are not yet within the boundaries of an Overseer's District, to the General Superintendent or his Assistants. The Missionary Committee and General Superintendent, who have been elected by the General European Conference, the supreme Governing body of the Mission,<sup>287</sup> shall control the work and jointly be responsible to the Executive Council for the proper carrying on of the work.

2. That an Annual Conference be held of all Native Ministers and certificated workers, who shall meet in conference with the General Superintendent, his Assistants, Overseers and members of the Missionary Committee.

3. The Missionary Committee shall keep in view a policy of the sub-division of the country into Districts, each under an Overseer. The boundaries of such districts shall be determined when such districts have been fully evangelised and overlapping begins.

4. That when necessity arises, the Missionary Committee shall appoint Overseers to certain Districts

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<sup>286</sup> Handbook for the Native Section. 1946. Available at the AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>287</sup> Underlining by the author.



or change Overseers from one district to another, the following General Conference to be advised of such appointments.

5. The Overseers shall do all in their power to extend and establish the work in their Districts and such adjoining areas as may be unevangelised, and that they can utilise the assistance of European lay preachers recommended by their respective European Assembly Boards, to extend the work locally. Such lay preacher to work under the supervision of the District Overseer and under the discipline of his European Local Board.

6. That a God-fearing policy be followed in respect of all appointments and ordinations to the Ministry. That it shall be the rule, only to ordain to the office of a Minister such as are manifestly called of the Holy Ghost and are baptised in the Spirit according to Acts 2:4, and have served truly and faithfully as Evangelists, Deacons and Local Preachers. He must be the husband of only one wife and be legally married (1 Tim. 3:12).

7. That all ordinations of Ministers and Evangelists in the Union shall be performed by the General Superintendent, his Assistants and Overseers, annually, during the Native General Conference.

8. The work of a Minister shall be:

(a) To take charge of any Assembly or District allotted to him by the Overseer.

(b) A Minister shall have power to administer all the Sacraments and authorise an Evangelist to administer such sacraments as the occasion arises.

(c) Evangelists:

The Evangelist shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on his certificate and shall work under the direction of his Overseer and Minister as the case may be.

(d) Deacons and Local Preachers:

The Deacons and Local Preacher shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on their certificates and shall work under the direction of their Overseer and Minister or Evangelist as the case may be.

(e) Class Leaders:

The Class Leader shall have authority to exercise such powers as are indicated on her certificate and shall work under the direction of her Overseer and Minister or Evangelist as the case may be.

9. That no ordination shall be performed of any man within the district of an Overseer, except upon the recommendation of such Overseer, who shall have consulted the local Assembly to which such a man is intended to be appointed.

That the names of such candidates to be ordained as a Minister or Evangelist being approved by the

General Superintendent and the District Overseer, shall be placed before the Native Conference for acceptance.

10. That between Conferences provisional appointments to the Ministry may be made by the General Superintendent upon the recommendation of the Overseer, such appointments to be placed before the next succeeding General Conference for ratification and the candidates for ordination, if they be approved.

11. That the foregoing procedure regarding the appointment and ordination of Ministers shall be followed in respect of Local Preachers, except that they shall be appointed by the District Overseer and shall be brought before their respective District Conferences for approval and if the General Superintendent or his Assistants are absent the District Overseer shall be competent to act in his place.

12. a) That it shall be the duty of the Overseer to hold a district Conference annually, the dates for same to be affixed in consultation with the General Superintendent. b) That where practical a District Quarterly Meeting of certificated workers be organised out of which an Executive Committee be elected annually, to work in co-operation with the Overseer.

13. That annual District Conference of Ministers, Evangelists, Deacons, Preachers and Class Leaders be competent to recommend transfer of Ministers and Preachers from one Assembly to another within their district and that the General Superintendent and Overseers shall follow such policy of transfer and exchange as may be considered advisable and in the best interest of the work.

14. That the Annual Native General Conference and District Conferences shall have the right to lodge complaints of a serious nature with the Missionary Committee.

15. That property purchased by the Native people in the name of the Apostolic Faith Mission for the Native work shall continue to be used only for the Native work and not for European work. And that all church property be deeded in the name of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

16. That it be essential that the members of each Assembly shall be taught to pay their tithes. All funds of Assemblies and Districts shall be dealt with in such a manner as shall be laid down by regulation from time to time.

17. That it shall be the policy of the Overseers to raise up within their Districts a striking force of active Evangelists and local Preachers who shall be zealous for the extension of the work.

18. That in connection with the foregoing clause it be the aim of each Overseer to conduct a Bible Course where such Preachers shall receive instruction

in the Word and to which they can return for fresh inspiration.

19. That it be the policy of the Mission to establish a Central Training School for Ministers, Workers and Teachers.

20. While we teach that candidates for baptism be taught to pay their tithes and offerings towards the work of the Lord before baptism we discountenance the practice of making a charge at the time of baptism or when children are consecrated; but we encourage people to make an offering at the Lord's table.

21. That the habit or dress of all Native Ministers shall be as plain as possible. The wearing of surplices, cords, sashes, carrying of crosses and other unscriptural practice be discountenanced.

22. That it be essential that all certificated Workers and Committee members be tithe payers and support the system of tithing in order to set the right example to the people to whom they minister.

23. That the district Overseers in consultation with the Ministers of the Circuit be competent to discipline or provisionally suspend any worker, such action be ratified by the next succeeding District Conference. A Minister with his local Committee shall be competent to discipline a member of his Assembly. Any such member to have the right of appeal to the District Conference.

24. That Conference sub-committees be appointed if necessary whose duties shall terminate at the close of the Conference.

25. That we only recognise marriages contracted according to Civil and Religious rites. That no appointment shall be made to any Ministry of anyone not legally married.

26. That a certificated worker, whether man or woman desiring to work or exercise any of his or her rights in a new field, must first obtain a removal note from his or her Overseer, and also a permit from the Overseer whose field he or she wishes to enter.

27. That the appointment of workers be recommended by the Assembly Committee through the Minister.

28. That certificates and notices be sent to the Minister in charge.

29. That every Assembly shall have a Committee who shall manage the affairs of the local church. In a small Assembly such Committee shall consist of seven members, of which two shall be nominated by the Minister and five to be elected by the congregation. In a large Assembly there shall be nine members, three to be nominated by the Minister and six to be elected by the congregation. The election shall take place annually and they shall only take office after their names have been submitted and approved of by the Overseer.

Significant issues that were dealt with in the "Policy" were: the white Conference (Workers Council) was clearly regarded as the authoritative body; the importance of conferences; the job description of the Superintendent, overseers; procedure for the appointment and ordination of workers; importance to raise up evangelists and local preachers (laity); training of workers.

In 1948 the Workers Council formulated the following<sup>288</sup>:

12. Nuwe sendelinge moet indien moontlik vir een jaar op proef dien onder die toesig van 'n ervare sendeling, en sal hulle daarop toele om so gou moontlik n naturelle taal aan te leer, as hulle nie reeds een ken nie.

13. Dagskool onderwysers mag uit die Sendingfonds ondersteun word, en vir die oprigting van goedgekeurde geboue moet daar op die pond vir pond stelsel bygedra word.

14. Sendelinge moet nie eiendomme koop of skemas aan die gang sit, sonder toestemming van die Sending-Komitee nie. Alle eiendomme sal in die naam van die Sending geregistreer word.

15. Maatskaplike gelykheid tussen Blankes, Indiers, Kleurlinge en Naturelle word nie deur die Sending geleer nie en moet geheel en al ontmoedig word. Ons erken dat God geen aannemer van die persoon is nie, en dat daar in elke volk diegene is wat Hom vrees, daarom preek ons die Evangelie vrymoediglik aan alle volke sonder om 'n uitsondering te maak. Laat dit egter algemeen bekend wees, dat in die Sending daar voorsiening gemaak word vir ons Blanke, Indier, Gekleurde en Naturelle lede om in hulle afsonderlike aanbiddingsplekke die Here te dien, waar daar vir hulle die sakramente bedien word.

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<sup>288</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council. 5th April 1948.  
Available at AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

The next significant ammendments were made at the Workers Council meeting of 1954.<sup>289</sup>

No.3 a) That the Missionary policy of the Apostolic Faith Mission, concerning the administrative responsibilities of the field, funds and Missionaries, be taken in revision and,

b) That the following principles in this connection be applied, viz. 1. that the Executive Council give every District Council his own Missionary fields, to be controlled by a Missionary Committee of at least three members to be appointed by the District Council, 2. that Missionaries in own area and on the same basis as a pastor be elligible through the Missionary Committee. 3. That the District Council themselves erect the necessary headquarters and facilities for the Missionaries, pay his support and provide in all his needs in connection with his service. 4. That all funds for Missionary work be controlled by the District Council. 5. That the District Council subdivide and minister their own territories according to the needs and their discretion in accordance.

c) That Missionary Committees set facilities to use part-time missionaries where possible, and take up active young people to help during their holidays."

In 1962 the policy was changed again. The main differences with the 1946 policy were: firstly it gave better structure to the ecclesiastical organisation of the AFM in Africa, and secondly it gave more autonomy to the black church.<sup>290</sup> A more complete evaluation of the missionary policy will be made in the last chapter.

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 1954.

<sup>290</sup> "Etlike Hoofmomente in die Geskiedenis van die Swart-Afdeling van die A.G.S. van S.A.", writer unknown, AFM Missions Department, 1982, p.1.

### The Mission Superintendents:

As far back as June 6, 1909, a motion was passed in the Executive Council:

That a white Superintendent or Superintendents be appointed by the Council over the Native Work in the respective colonies of South Africa who shall act in harmony with and subject to the approval<sup>291</sup> and confirmation of the Executive Council.

Nowhere is any evidence that such an appointment was made. Apparently Lehman, one of the Lake party who came to South Africa in the early days, was responsible for the black work initially.<sup>292</sup> Lehman was the only one of Lake's party who could speak Zulu and who had done missionary work in South Africa previously.<sup>293</sup> The job description of the Superintendent of Missions was:

De Europese Superintendent en zij assistenten die het algemene toezicht over het werk zullen houden. Zending Overzieners die aangesteld zullen worden om zekere distrikten te besturen en aan de Algemene Superintendent of zijn assistenten verantwoordelijk zullen zijn.<sup>294</sup>

In the 1946 reformulation of the missions policy this job description was confirmed. This policy is still applied today. The only difference is that in 1978 they changed the title of Superintendent to "The Director of the Missions Department". Because of the importance that was and still is

<sup>291</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p.39.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 23 February 1909.

<sup>293</sup> Lindsay, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>294</sup> "Onze Naturelle Gedraglijn" in De Trooster, March 1919, point 1.

attached to this position, a chronological overview of the superintendents is given.

On November 3, 1911, the first white missionary "Superintendent" was appointed.<sup>295</sup>

It is proposed by Br. Lake and seconded by Br. Scott Moffat that Br. Alb.E. Sharpe be appointed as Elder in charge of the native work of the Mission.

Not much is known about Sharpe, except that he received his certificate as local preacher on January 30, 1911.<sup>296</sup> Apparently he served also as manager of the Comforter.<sup>297</sup>

On November 13, 1913 P.L. Le Roux was elected Superintendent. He held this position until 1929, together with the Presidency, except for a few years in between. He resigned the Superintendency in 1929 because of ill health.<sup>298</sup> In between these years W.F. Dugmore filled this position from 1916 until March 1919.<sup>299</sup> Why he took over from Le Roux for this short period is not known. Le Roux was

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<sup>295</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1911, p. 86.

<sup>296</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1911, p.74.

<sup>297</sup> Comforter, July/August 1911.

<sup>298</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1929.

<sup>299</sup> Comforter, March 1919 mentions Dugmore retiring as Superintendent.

again Superintendent until July 29, 1920 when again for some unknown reason Dugmore took over from him.<sup>300</sup>

Dugmore held this position until February 1923 when Le Roux once more took up the Superintendency.<sup>301</sup> On March 29, 1929 Le Roux was succeeded by A.W. Preller as the Executive Council relieved him of the Superintendency. Preller had formerly been the treasurer of the white Executive Council and remained Superintendent until 1934.

In the October 1935 issue of the Trooster, M.H. Wright is mentioned as the General Missionary Superintendent. Wright was a Canadian missionary who worked under the banner of the AFM in South Africa.<sup>302</sup> When Wright left for America to "go and awaken a keener interest for missionary work among the American people, on behalf of dying souls in Africa", Preller acted as Superintendent in his absence.<sup>303</sup> After an absence of nearly two years, Wright resumed his duties on February 1, 1946. After about one year he resigned because of bad health and decided to return to the USA. F.J. Hawley was appointed in his place and served in this

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<sup>300</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, July 29, 1920, p.411.

<sup>301</sup>De Trooster, Feb./March 1923, p.12

<sup>302</sup>Die Trooster, October 1935, p. 14.

<sup>303</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, April 1944, p.43.



capacity from 1947 - 1950.<sup>304</sup> Not much is known about Hawley except that he served on the white Executive Council, and that after eight years in full-time ministry he was elected Superintendent.<sup>305</sup> After serving in this capacity for only two years and ten months, he also had to resign and go on pension because of bad health. He was succeeded by M.J. van Rensburg who later on became President of the AFM. He was a member of the white Executive Council. He also remained chairman of the Sunday School Department of the white AFM while being Superintendent of Missions. Van Rensburg had no experience at all of missionary work when he was appointed Superintendent.<sup>306</sup> After four years serving in this capacity, he was succeeded by J.W. Gillingham in April 1954. Gillingham, who was to become Vice-President of the white AFM, became superintendent after being assistant Superintendent for six months.<sup>307</sup> It seems that P. Fourie acted as Superintendent in 1958 in the period after Gillingham and just before Moller became Superintendent.<sup>308</sup> He was succeeded by Dr. F.P. Moller in June 1958, who served in this capacity until he was elected as General Secretary

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<sup>304</sup>Die Trooster, November 1947, p.2.

<sup>305</sup>Ibid., February, 1950, p. 12.

<sup>306</sup>Ibid., p14.

<sup>307</sup>Comforter, May, 1954, P. 13.

<sup>308</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 14/8/1958, p.6.

of the AFM in January 1962. From 1964 - 1967 G.R. Wessels filled this position. In 1969 W.A. Smit, one of the senior Executive Council (white) members became Superintendent until 1971 when he was succeeded by the present Director of Missions E.J. Gschwend, 1971.<sup>309</sup>

Along with the well-trained Le Roux, the present Director of Missions, Edgar Gschwend must be one of the most effective leaders of the Missions department so far in the history of the AFM in Africa.<sup>310</sup> Some of his outstanding accomplishments are: 1) He has raised the number of theological training centres from one to ten. 2) He has emphasised a policy of indigenisation. 3) Keeping their political and nationalistic feelings in mind he has changed the Constitutions of the AFM's "mission churches" in other National States ("homelands") and African Countries. Each Church is now allowed to change its own Regulations, but to keep the unity intact between all of them, the Constitution can only be changed by way of consensus between all the

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<sup>309</sup>Gedenkboek van die AGS: 1908 - 1988, Westdene: AGS Drukkers, 1988, p.22.

<sup>310</sup>Gschwend was born on the 21st August 1929 in Lesotho, where his parents were missionaries of the Mahon Mission. The well known missionary Edgar Mahon was his grandfather. Gschwend was ordained by the AFM in June 1953 and sent as a missionary to the Orange Free State. From 1953-1957 he was missionary for the West Rand District Council and in 1969, he became the assistant of the Missions Superintendent W.A. Smit. In 1971 he took over the missions leadership as Superintendent.

churches.<sup>311</sup> 4) Gschwend has instrumentally been responsible together with Reinhard Bonnke, for the starting of Christ For All Nations, a huge impact-making evangelistic association that gave tremendous impetus to the numerical growth of the AFM in Africa.<sup>312</sup> 5) Gschwend has also done a monumentious work of trying to dissolve the racial tension and problems that have developed over the years in the AFM.<sup>313</sup>

#### Condition of the Black Work

In 1910 Le Roux reported to the white executive council that apart from the name "Zion", their teaching of a clean life, no drinking, and the practice of healing was attractive to the blacks.<sup>314</sup> So blacks belonging to "Zion" took exception to the black worker of the AFM, Maroane (surname not mentioned), who was an overseer, but used tobacco and western medicine and permitted the "use of kaffir beer".

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<sup>311</sup>This is only applicable for the AFM in Africa in Lesotho, Transkei, Swaziland, Botswana, Vendaland, Namibia and South Africa. I would think that all the "homelands" gaining independence would be added to the list.

<sup>312</sup>See Ron Steele: Plundering Hell. Ravensmoor, South Africa: Sceptre Pub., 1984.

<sup>313</sup>Biographical information given to me by Gschwend during an interview at Lyndhurst, 6/3/1986.

<sup>314</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1910, p.60.

Maroane, according to Le Roux, was even considered an "Ethiopian" minister by the outsiders. The Council decided that Lake would see Maroane and that a new black leader for the Zulu's would be appointed. Maroane later resigned from the AFM.

Concerning the autonomy of the "native work", Lake reports in the July/August 1911 edition of the Comforter,

A fact not duly appreciated, is that the vast majority of native work is being conducted by natives themselves, without white assistance, except in the general direction and superintendence through the Executive Council in Johannesburg.<sup>315</sup>

That same edition also mentioned that the "native" work in Johannesburg was growing progressively.

The leader reports that from 600 to 1000 natives attend the Sunday afternoon open air meetings on the Market Square, and that many get saved there. A baptismal service is conducted once a month and each month there are a good number to be baptized. This demonstrates that the natives are quite capable to get their own people saved; their preaching is clear and strong in power of God.<sup>316</sup>

One does not know what measures they used in evaluating the soundness of the "native work" at that stage. Because very few of the whites could speak one of the black languages, they usually could not understand what was being preached. I think Lake was perhaps too optimistic in his evaluation, as was proved a little later on.

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<sup>315</sup>Comforter, July/August 1911

<sup>316</sup>Ibid

In 1913 the Executive Council decided to call a conference of the leading native workers to "consider what steps should be taken to place the native work on a sound basis."<sup>317</sup> The recommendation of the Executive Council meeting held on September 30, 1914 attested to the fact that many problems were experienced with the black workers. "This council recommends that the Superintendent of the Native Work should call a meeting of the native overseers to sit with the council and consider the problems facing us in the Native Work."<sup>318</sup>

At an Executive Council meeting held on December 7, 1914, a telegram was read from Ezra Mbonambi requesting "prayer for a preacher who had been arrested for trespassing at Melmoth, Zululand."<sup>319</sup> Nothing more was mentioned concerning the nature of the offence. The reaction of the council to this was sharp: "Several members commented on the unsatisfactory state of the Native Work and spoke of the desirability of the overseers soon meeting to discuss the problems."<sup>320</sup> At a later date, mention was made of a worker who sold his daughter:

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<sup>317</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 15/3/1913, p.104.

<sup>318</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 30/9/1913, p.166.

<sup>319</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 7/12/1914.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

Bro. M.A. de Vries asked what should be done to Native Worker Stephanus Mooki who had sold his child of tender years to an elderly man. She to be eventually his wife. Bro. Dugmore explained the stand he had taken in such matters.<sup>321</sup>

Was this not perhaps lobola? If so, this would be a striking example of monocultural misunderstanding.

Apparently, dogmatic and liturgical problems arose in the black church from time to time. Some of these were: the "use of tobacco and kaffir beer",<sup>322</sup> polygamy,<sup>323</sup> washing of feet was regarded as a part of Holy Communion,<sup>324</sup> wearing of a special frock (blue dress) by the Class Leaders (prayer women),<sup>325</sup> ancestor worship,<sup>326</sup> selling of Holy water.<sup>327</sup>

Some of the most important factors which were perceived as contributing to this "distressful state of affairs", were:

1. Lack of good, sound training and teaching.
2. Lack of qualified oversight.

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<sup>321</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 6/4/1918.

<sup>322</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 20/8/1910, p.61.

<sup>323</sup>Comforter, March 1919, p.5.

<sup>324</sup>Ibid, November 1921, p.7.

<sup>325</sup>Minutes of the Workers Council, April 1943.

<sup>326</sup>Comforter, Oct. 1949. p.11.

<sup>327</sup>Ibid, Oct. 1954, p.3.

3. Vast distances and lack of finances which made meaningful oversight impossible.

4. Workers from other churches were accepted before they or their backgrounds had been well investigated.

5. Workers were ordained too easily before they had gone through a probationary period.

As there was absolutely no training for the black workers during these pioneering years, one can understand the problems that arose. At the same time the little teaching that they did receive from the white workers was totally insufficient because they themselves lacked theological training. By stating that they also lacked qualified oversight, we are simply saying that the less training one has, the more oversight one needs. Because of the vastness of the work, the lack of good transportation, and the rapidity with which the work grew, good oversight was almost impossible. From the report of an annual white missions conference, it became clear that the biggest factors hindering the missionaries' effectiveness were long distances and a lack of financial support.

Terwyl die ondersteuning en toelae nog so swak is word dit baie moeilik gevind om die uithoeke van die velde te bereik, gevolglik gebeur dit dat naturelle werkers soms van koers af raak omdat hulle nie genoeg onder toesig van die blanke opsieners is nie.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Trooster, January 1939, p.21.

For the larger part, the black, totally untrained workers were on their own, to preach what they thought was right and to do what they thought were best. By 1937 only 7 white overseers were expected to supervise over 40 000 black church members.<sup>329</sup> In a mission report it was mentioned about a black pastor that had not seen a missionary for 15 years.<sup>330</sup>

In the "Naturelle Gedraglijn" published in 1919, the need for training was acknowledged in point 18:

Dat het in verband met voorgaande klausule het doel van elk Zendings Overziener zal zijn om een Bijbel opleidings school te hebben waar zulke Predikers onderricht in het woord zullen ontvangen en waarheen zij kunnen gaan voor nieuwe kracht.<sup>331</sup>

Nowhere do we find any indication that the background of workers of other Churches who joined the AFM, were well looked into, or that they received any teaching or training in the AFM's doctrines. Surely this must have added to the already existing doctrinal problems and differences, and provided a breeding ground for doctrinal heresies and

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(Footnote Continued)  
The same happened in South West Africa (Namibia):  
Comforter, August 1945, p.5.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, March 23, 1937

<sup>330</sup> Comforter, December 1956, p.13. See also:  
Comforter, January 1939, p.21.

<sup>331</sup> De Trooster, March 1919



errors. This problem is mentioned by one of the first Superintendents of the native work, W.F. Dugmore:

Nog een ernstige kwaad is onachtzaamheid in het toelaten van mensen als predikers. In zulk een plechtige zaak moet de grootste zorg gedragen worden en het is nodig dat de Konferentie stappen neemt om behoorlijke veiligheids maatregelen te nemen in die richting.<sup>332</sup>

The above mentioned factors are very important because they added impetus to the formation of some of the African Independent Churches.

Documentation abounds that proves that the relationship between the black workers and their white "mother-church" was not always too sound. As early as 1915, Bro. Oliphant was accused of having said: "...he has nothing to do with the white people except Bro.Lake".<sup>333</sup>

Oliphant then admits that Elder Ezekiel Lutuli had said that he was going over to Oliphant because he was not under white supervision, but that he had corrected this wrong impression. In Basutoland (Lesotho),

Some misunderstanding has been existing between headquarters and the leader of the work in Basutoland during the last nine months or so. The leader there, Edward Lion, does not want to submit himself to the Mission as other native leaders do. Consequently it has become necessary for us to get a white man<sup>334</sup> to go and settle there and take control of the work.

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<sup>332</sup>Dugmore, W.F. in De Trooster, March 1919, p.3.

<sup>333</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 2/2/1915.

<sup>334</sup>Comforter, August 1921, p.6.

One of the infrequent times when the blacks were not as submissive to their "white fathers" as was usually the case, was documented in 1937:

Various of the native brethren present explained their grievances in connection with the sale of the old Mooi Street Tabernacle. The Executive Council brethren then explained how the matter was done to assist the native assembly under the circumstances.<sup>335</sup>

This was clearly another occasion in which the white brethren made a decision that affected the blacks without consulting them.

The following illustrates another occasion on which the black pastors were not in total submission to their "white mother-church"

Drie van ons Naturelle predikers het die Sending verlaat om n Bantu AGS te stig. Hulle was in baie plekke suksesvol waar ons nie prominente geboue het nie, en in party gevalle waar ons geboue het, het hulle probeer om die gebou sowel as die gemeente te neem. In elk geval verset ons ons teen hulle waar moontlik, maar dit sal noodwendig wees om ons posisie te konsolideer anders sal hierdie 'presiding elders' baie invloed he oor die Naturelle. Waar nodig is ons van plan om die saak teen die Bantu AGS-Kerk te verdedig al sou dit ook hof toe gaan.<sup>336</sup>

The names of the three "rebellious" workers were not mentioned, nor the circumstances that provoked them to this action. Other instances of rebellious conduct by blacks were also documented. A black worker once summoned the AFM:

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<sup>335</sup>Ibid, May 19, 1937

<sup>336</sup>Minutes of the Workers Council, 7/4/1948, pp.2-3.

'n Naturel het ons aangeskryf en gedink dat hy een van ons kerkgeboue kon vat. Ons was genootsaak om ons saak te verdedig en ons het dit met koste gewen.<sup>337</sup>

All these signs of revolt, were symptoms of much deeper problems that existed in the whole missions policy of the AFM. Extensive work spread over vast distances made close supervision impossible. It is likely that not half of the problems between the black workers and their "mother-church" were even known, and even less documented.

Documentation shows that the "mission station approach" was followed in many places in the early years.<sup>338</sup> It must have been Le Roux's solid leadership that made it mandatory for all new missionaries to attend language classes.<sup>339</sup> Whether it really was put into practice is not sure as no further evidence about it can be found.

New impetus was given to the missionary work when a resolution was taken that,

...they set aside one Sunday in each month as a Missionary Sunday and impress the missionary<sup>340</sup> need upon the people and give offerings for that work.

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<sup>337</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council, 7/4/1948, p.2.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 4/4/1918, p. 173. See also the Comforter, Sept. 1927, p.8.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 4/4/1918, p.173.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

For the first time the March 1919 edition of De Trooster (Comforter) was devoted to missions. Mentioned in this edition was the inauguration of the new headquarters for the black AFM on 19th May 1918. Also for the first time it was mentioned that the country was divided into districts with an overseer taking responsibility for each district.<sup>341</sup> At this stage the black section comprised 200 Ministers and Evangelists and 600 Local Preachers.<sup>342</sup>

Not only were American missionaries working for the AFM in South Africa, but six missionaries were also sent and supported by Sweden's Filadelfia Mission.<sup>343</sup>

#### **Bible school for Black Workers:**

As early as 1920 P.L. le Roux emphasised the necessity of theological training for black workers.<sup>344</sup> Although a Bible School for whites was started in 1929, nothing was done for the blacks. For the first four decades no official training school existed. The overseers of the different districts were supposed to give elementary training to their black workers. Most probably very little of this was done if

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<sup>341</sup>De Trooster, March 1919, p.3.

<sup>342</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1/4/1920.

<sup>343</sup>Ibid.

<sup>344</sup>Ibid. 1920, pp.408, 422-424.

one takes into account that the missionaries themselves had no training. At the same time it is very clear that because of the vastness of the distances and the constant lack of financial resources, most of the time the contact between the white missionaries and the black workers was not very good.

Apparently the only one who realized the urgent need was the black overseer Elias Letwaba, who started the Patmos Bible School in 1930 near Potgietersrus.<sup>345</sup> What made this effort monumental was the fact that he started and built this School not only on his own initiative, but also without any financial assistance from the white "Mother-Church".

After the Executive Council decided in 1942 to start an "official" Bible School for blacks, they asked veteran missionary J.R. Gschwend to be the first principal of the school that was situated in "Western Native Township".<sup>346</sup> When it was eventually started it was headed by Pastor E. Cooksey. This school was only for the training of the black workers of that region.

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<sup>345</sup>Comforter, 1/1/1930, p.7.

<sup>346</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 3/5/1943.

In 1946 the AFM received a farm near Brakpan as a gift from a Sis. F.B. Smith.<sup>347</sup> When a Bible School for blacks was started there, the Group Areas Act soon forced them to dislocate.<sup>348</sup> After that farm was sold the Missions Department bought another farm near Bapsfontein.<sup>349</sup> The first Bible School for the training of all black workers was opened here on January 20, 1951 with E. Cooksey the principal. In 1953 this farm was also sold and it was decided to move the Bible School to Lady Selborne near Pretoria.<sup>350</sup> The new principal was J.R. Gschwend who headed it up until 1955 when he resigned to start All Nations Gospel Publishers, a literature distributing organisation.<sup>351</sup> He was replaced on April 1, 1955 by the brother of E. Cooksey, namely John Cooksey. After a time this property was also expropriated because of the Group Areas Act in 1964. The Bible School was then relocated to Potgietersrus and finally again in the seventies to Mabopane just outside Pretoria. In 1976 the AFM started Pan-African Bible College, an extra mural correspondence school which

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<sup>347</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council, April 1948.

<sup>348</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 7/4/1948, p.2.

<sup>349</sup> Trooster, February 1951, p.12.

<sup>350</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 25/8/1953, p.4130.

<sup>351</sup> Trooster, April 1955, p.14.

would in time to come train literally thousands of black pastors from all over Africa.<sup>352</sup>

The views of the black pastors about their theological training, as reflected in an opinion poll, was:<sup>353</sup>

- 1) 96% are strongly in favour of theological training.
- 2) Surprisingly, 57% felt that their training was insufficient.
- 3) The majority (92%) had a vital need for further training.
- 4) If they had to start their training all over again, 76% would prefer to do it through something like an "In-service-programme", or correspondence, or Theological Education by Extention (TEE).

#### General Development of the AFM in Africa

Because all the major themes relating to the history of the AFM in Africa have been developed by now, the following section may appear to be fragmented and incohesive. However the bits of information are important for the understanding of the development of the AFM in Africa during this period.

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<sup>352</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 13/10/1976, p.7.

<sup>353</sup>Opinion Poll taken amongst the black pastors of the AFM in Mafikeng on 18/10/1983 at their Spiritual Conference.

From a missions report one can conclude that the black AFM had some contact and problems with the Ethiopian Independent Churches. Exactly what the problems were is nowhere documented.

Zaterdag namiddag werd gewijd aan de bespreking van de Ethiopiese bewegingen, die vandaag in de kerken heersen. Men raakte vele tedere punten aan en dat leidde tot volkomen oorwinning. Wij zijn er verzekerd van dat die beweging grotendeels uitgeroeid is uit de Apostoliese Geloof Zending. De duivel was bezig tweedracht te zaaien gedurende de laatste paar jaar, maar dank God, dat er overwinning is door Jezus bloed over al Zijn vijanden.<sup>354</sup>

The first Ethiopian Independent Church was established in Pretoria in 1892 by Mangena Mokone.<sup>355</sup> They called themselves Ethiopians in reference to biblical texts such as Ps.68:31, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God", which they then interpret as a promise of the evangelisation of Africa. The Ethiopian movement soon spread beyond Pretoria, incorporating many more secessionists from the white-controlled churches. According to Odendaal it is significant that the Ethiopian Church succeeded in gaining recognition from the government of South Africa.<sup>356</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century the Ethiopian movement had

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., February/March 1923, p.2.

<sup>355</sup> Odendaal, Andre: Vukani Bantu! - The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912. Cape Town: David Philip, 1984, p.25.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., p.26.



gained thousands of adherents and spread throughout South Africa. Odendaal describes the movement as

Implicitly political in nature, it indirectly complemented the formal activities of the political elite by politicising Africans, articulating dissatisfaction with the inequalities of white rule and propagating African assertiveness.<sup>357</sup>

During the 1924 black church conference it was decided that in future only elders would be allowed to serve communion. They also prohibited kissing between the sexes.<sup>358</sup> By "kissing" they were probably referring to the "brotherly kiss" of I Cor. 16:20.

It is interesting to note the immediate effect conversion had on some: "Na de doopdienst begonnen de vrouwens en jongemeisjes hunne versierselen zoals ringen enz. af te halen en weg te werpen."<sup>359</sup> Whether they were taught before conversion that this was necessary is not known. Pietism and rigoristic ethics were trademarks of the Pentecostal Movement. Hollenweger observes: "For Pentecostals, rigorist ethics seem to be the only way of protesting against the moral perplexity of our times."<sup>360</sup> In most of the older Pentecostal churches one can nowadays

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>358</sup> Trooster, January 1924, p. 7. More discussion on the subject found in Trooster August 1921, p.2

<sup>359</sup> Comforter, February 1922, p.9.

<sup>360</sup> Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit. p.405.

observe a relaxation of the ethical rigorism, probably due to sociological reasons. In the AFM certain taboos are still maintained, such as no smoking, drinking of alcohol, swearing etc. Black AFM members are expected to walk the "narrow road" with conscientiousness.<sup>361</sup> In principle there is no difference between the discipline in the black and white sections of the AFM.

On December 18, 1925 the Executive Council decided that if no white overseer was available for a black district, the white chairman of the white District Council will automatically be overseer for the Black Work.<sup>362</sup>

From the Executive Council discussion it is clear that the lack of missiological training was strongly felt. "The second was that our missionaries should receive training before leaving for the field along the following lines: (1) Biblical (2) Educational and (3) Practical."<sup>363</sup>

In 1932 well-known Pentecostal leader David J. du Plessis stated that it cost 100 pounds per month to

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<sup>361</sup> See Handbook for the Native Section, p. 10 - 13

<sup>362</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 18/12/1925.

<sup>363</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, March 28, 1923

effectively support a missionary.<sup>364</sup> Not that they received nearly that amount. Their actual salary was 10 pounds per month. At the same time it is documented that black workers only received 1 pound per month in the Soutpansberg area.<sup>365</sup>

On April 2, 1936, David du Plessis was appointed Missionary Representative of the AFM in Australasia with the mandate to raise funds there for South Africa's missions.<sup>366</sup>

At a conference in 1939, the blacks voted unanimously that polygamy is to be strictly forbidden amongst the workers.<sup>367</sup> Although nothing is said, it can be supposed that the same would be expected of ordinary church members.

In 1950 the full-time work force of the black AFM comprised 113 pastors and 212 Evangelists.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>364</sup>Trooster, 1930

<sup>365</sup>Comforter, October 1932, p. 20

<sup>366</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 2/4/1936, p.7.

<sup>367</sup>Trooster, Jan. 1939, p.21.

<sup>368</sup>Trooster, May 1950, p.14.

For better cooperation and coordination between the missions department and the white district councils white mission-representatives were appointed in each district.<sup>369</sup>

The AFM had a vision not only to reach Africa, but the whole world. "Sendingwerk in Duitsland: Die Algemene Werkersraad het reeds toegestem dat ons Sendingwerk in Duitsland moet begin."<sup>370</sup> Not only did the AFM wish to expand to Europe, but also to the USA.<sup>371</sup> They also had a part in radio evangelism, transmitting from Greece to Russia.<sup>372</sup> These mission outreaches to Europe and the USA never materialized because it was decided in 1963 that,

Met die huidige fondse en personeel tot ons beskikking en die politieke omstandighede is die gedagte van die sendelinge om meer op bestaande velde te konsentreer.<sup>373</sup>

In a report by Gerrie Wessels about the World Pentecostal Conference he attended in 1950 in London, mention is made of the "Indigenous Church" principle that had been highlighted there. "Die Sendende Kerk was slegs die steierboute rondom die Nasionale Kerk, en behoort verwyder

<sup>369</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council, March 1951.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid, p. 18

<sup>371</sup> Workers Council Minutes, 1953.

<sup>372</sup> Trooster, November 1953, p.18

<sup>373</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 15/8/1963, p.12.

te word, sodat die werk van die Nasionale Kerk nie verdraag word nie."<sup>374</sup> Unfortunately, the white AFM was very reluctant to adhere to this principle.

Reports of black pastors who were mightily used by God abound. One example is Robert Massi/Chinguwo (it is not clear what his surname was), who worked in Nyassaland.

Enige jare gelede is hy gered in Rhodesie en toe vertrek om aan sy eie volk te preek. Reeds het hy 35 kerke gebou en gemeentes gestig. 'n Maand gelede het hy gepreek in 'n groot Naturelle Stad en skares van tussen 3000 en 4000 het na hom geluister.<sup>375</sup>

A good example of what Australian missiologist Dr. Allan Tippetts would call a "power encounter" is documented. A power encounter is a visible practical demonstration that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the false gods or spirits worshipped or feared by a people group.<sup>376</sup>

One man came claiming that he had medicine with him that had power to change a piece of cloth into a snake, and another kind that would put the spirit of a lion or a snake on a person. The people were so frightened at this that they started to run away, but Jonah called them back, saying, 'If my God is not greater in power than these demons, then let them hurt me,' and so saying, he took the 'medicine' in his hands and prayed mightily to God. When the people saw that no harm came to him, they all glorified

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<sup>374</sup>Workers Council Minutes, 1953

<sup>375</sup>Trooster, February 1954, p. 16

<sup>376</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: "Special kinds of Church Growth" Unpublished class notes, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984, p.14

God and others believed on Jesus.<sup>377</sup>

### Richard Ngidi

In 1956 a Zulu, Richard Ngidi joined the AFM in Africa. Eventually Ngidi became one of the most influential black leaders that the AFM ever had. Richard Sihlobo Ngidi was born on 6th January 1921 at Mzinyati in the district of Emaqahadini, Natal.<sup>378</sup> Apparently Ngidi was dedicated to God and His Service seven months prior to his birth. Ngidi received his primary and secondary education at Inyoni and Inanda, Natal. He then attended Sasri College in Durban before being employed as clerk by African Explosives.<sup>379</sup> On 30th July, 1943 he married Regina Mtwana Mbambo.<sup>380</sup> Sometime after this she became ill and suffered from severe attacks of asthma for twelve years. Eight of their children also died while fairly young.

During 1952 Ngidi surrendered his heart and life to Christ. Shortly after this he was baptised in water and also

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<sup>377</sup> Comforter, September 1954, p. 13

<sup>378</sup> Unless otherwise stated all of Ngidi's biographical information was obtained from this source: Erasmus, Gert S.: A Tribute To And Brief Biographical Review Of The Life Of Richard Sihlobo Ngidi. AFM Missions Department, Lyndhurst, 1985.

<sup>379</sup> Mkhize, Khaba: "Rev. Ngidi dies", in Echo, supplement to the Natal Witness No.249, 9th May 1985, p.1.

<sup>380</sup> Erasmus, op. cit. p.1.

baptised with the Holy Spirit. Because of this he was excommunicated from his church.<sup>381</sup> One day, after a time of fasting and prayer, Ngidi "had a vision of a golden road leading to heaven, with the letters AFM written on it".<sup>382</sup> In 1956 Ngidi met Pastor Mthiyane of the AFM in Africa, and became a member of the AFM.

In response to his calling Ngidi was admitted in 1962 to the Lerato Bible School in Lady Selbourne.<sup>383</sup> Ngidi completed his training and was accepted as a pastor of the AFM in Africa during 1963 and was ordained on 19th March, 1965.<sup>384</sup> Sensing the tremendous spiritual need among his people, combined with his desire for more frequent manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his ministry, Ngidi fasted and prayed for forty days. In the days that followed the fast, God performed extraordinary miracles of healing; the blind saw, the deaf heard, cripples walked and hundreds were filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>385</sup> Among those healed, was Ngidi's wife Regina who was

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<sup>381</sup>Unfortunately no details are given about by whom or where he was baptised in water, or about his former church.

<sup>382</sup>Erasmus, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>383</sup>Mkhize, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>384</sup>Erasmus, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>385</sup>Wimber, John: Power Evangelism - Signs and Wonders and Church Growth, Part 1, Vineyard Ministries International, 1984, p.107.

delivered from asthma. Ngidi's success in praying for the sick became well-known. The General Secretary of the AFM in Africa, Gert Erasmus, reports that in one of Ngidi's evangelistic campaigns, ten blind people received their sight.<sup>386</sup> The success of his campaigns is clearly demonstrated by the fact that when Ngidi entered the ministry in Natal and Kwazulu, there were only 9 assemblies. This increased under his ministry and leadership to 212 assemblies. The full-time workers increased from 13 to 175.<sup>387</sup> Ngidi was the first to effectively use black women-workers. With 30 well trained women-workers under his supervision, several new assemblies were established. Because of the impact of his ministry and leadership in Natal, the AFM in Africa in Natal became known as "the Church of Ngidi".<sup>388</sup>

Ngidi ministered in several other parts of Southern Africa as well as in Europe. He was a member of the Executive Committee and the Executive Council of the AFM in Africa for 15 years. Ngidi also became the first black Vice-Chairman of the Executive Council of the AFM in Africa. He died on the 4th May, 1985, in the Edendale Hospital,

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<sup>386</sup>Erasmus, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>387</sup>Ibid., p.3.

<sup>388</sup>Ibid.



leaving his wife, three daughters, one son, and four grandchildren. His funeral was attended by more than 8000 people.<sup>389</sup> A journalist from the Natal Witness, Khaba Mkhize, described Ngidi "as being in the mould of esteemed pastors like Billy Graham and Back To God's Nicholas Bhengu...".<sup>390</sup>

The significance of Ngidi's ministry and leadership in the AFM in Africa is especially evidenced in the following. Firstly, the emphasis he placed on evangelism and his successful evangelistic campaigns, especially tent-campaigns, enthused the black pastors of the AFM and a new wave of evangelism swept all over South Africa. Secondly, Ngidi's teaching and example of regular fasting and prayer exhorted the other pastors to follow his example. Up to this day the majority of the pastors of the AFM in Africa fast and pray annually for extended periods (many for 40 days). Thirdly, in congruence with the first two, Ngidi's practice and success in praying for the healing of the sick caused many pastors to model themselves after him. Although praying for the sick was always part of the AFM in Africa, Ngidi sparked off a fresh expectation of the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit amongst the black (and white)

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<sup>389</sup> Pinksterboodskapper, Julie 1985, p.18.

<sup>390</sup> Mkhize, op. cit., p.1.

pastors. Fourthly, Ngidi never allowed any discussion about politics, of any nature, in any meeting in which he was present. Being such a strong and respected leader, this enhanced the traditional apolitical feeling in the AFM in Africa even further. Whether Ngidi's apolitical stance was the result of training by white missionaries, or the traditional view that anything of a political nature is sinful is not sure. Probably it was the latter.

#### Frank Chikane

In 1975 a student with the name of Frank Chikane started his theological studies at the AFM's Correspondence College. Although Chikane's ministry in the AFM was shortlived, he has become such a prominent leader of the church in South Africa, that we ought to look at a biographical sketch of him, and consider his significance in relation to the AFM in Africa.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>391</sup>His autobiography is used as our source of information:  
Chikane, Frank: No Life of My Own. Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1988.

Frank Chikane was born on the 3rd January 1951, at No.7 Orlando East, Johannesburg.<sup>392</sup> He was raised together with six brothers and sisters by his father James Chikane, who was a pastor of the AFM, and his mother Erenia.

As a young pentecostal in high-school he was regularly challenged by non-believing black students about the "dispossession of blacks of their land and livestock", and the oppression of blacks by so-called white Christians, who even justified their practices from Scripture.<sup>393</sup> According to Chikane, they as black youths had to choose between rejecting the Bible because it was misused, or otherwise take responsibility for "reappropriating the Bible, putting it in its rightfull place, and reinterpreting it".<sup>394</sup> This realization clearly represents a turning point in Chikane's life.

I began to be jealous about the misuse of the Word of God to justify the status quo. I became angry that this trend, this white form of Christianity, was nullifying Jesus' work on the Cross, that it raised the question of the credibility of the mission of Jesus Christ in this world. To me the most serious sin was this sin of subverting the very mission of God in this world by creating a situation where millions of blacks would fail to believe.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., pp.36-40.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

After Chikane matriculated at Orlando High School in 1971, he registered in 1972 at the University of the North, Pietersburg, for a BSc degree. He did not complete this because his studies were disrupted during his third and final year of study, mainly as a result of the "Viva FRELIMO" rallies which celebrated the independence of Mozambique.<sup>396</sup> Although these rallies led to the arrest of many students, Chikane was never arrested, but was so involved providing help to those detained and their families, as well as involvement in student leadership, that together with the added stress of the final examinations it led him to having a nervous breakdown during an examination session. Because he was afraid that he might be victimized, he did not return to the University the next year.<sup>397</sup>

Because Chikane was raised in the AFM, and convinced of God's calling in his life, he joined the evangelistic organisation, Christ For All Nations<sup>398</sup> in 1975. In Chikane's own words:

There were a lot of theological contradictions which confronted me during this period, and thus forced me to

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid., p.176.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> The German Reinhard Bonnke arrived in South Africa in 1966 as missionary. Eventually he started an evangelistic association, Christ For All Nations, which played an important part in the growth of the AFM in Africa. See: Steele, op. cit.

review the whole system of Christian theology.<sup>399</sup>

During 1975 Chikane also registered with the Pan-African Bible College, the correspondence section of the Bible College of the AFM in Africa, in order to be trained as a minister of the AFM. After he resigned at Christ For All Nations, he worked for a short period as an evangelist for the AFM. In June 1976 he was placed as pastor in a congregation in Kagiso Township, Krugersdorp.<sup>400</sup> Chikane was well "aware of the overemphasis on the spiritual-vertical relationship with God - over and above the social-horizontal dimension" in the AFM.<sup>401</sup> His efforts to try to balance the pendulum soon resulted in his detention by the South African police.<sup>402</sup>

After receiving his Diploma in Theology in 1979, Chikane was ordained as a pastor of the AFM in March 1980. Apparently the abstaining from participation in any politics was one of the conditions expected from him in order to be ordained.<sup>403</sup> He explains his decision to become a minister

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<sup>399</sup>Chikane, op. cit., p.177.

<sup>400</sup>Ibid., p.47.

<sup>401</sup>Ibid., p.49.

<sup>402</sup>He was detained in: Jan.1977-Feb.1977 (7 days); 6th June 1977-Jan.1978; Nov.1980 (3 days); 20th Nov.1981-7th July 1982.

<sup>403</sup>Chikane is the first pastor in the history of the  
(Footnote Continued)

in the AFM, "which seemed quite conservative, and which was dominated by Afrikaners who were part and parcel of the system of apartheid...",<sup>404</sup> as follows:

This is the church within which I was brought up. But there is something more than that. It was the depth of its spirituality that appealed to me. However narrow and shallow this could be, it is this depth of spirituality...<sup>405</sup>

In 1980 he married a girl called Kagiso.<sup>406</sup> Although what happened to Chikane after 1980 falls outside the chronological scope of our study, it behoves us to briefly document it because of its importance. During August 1981 Chikane was suspended by the West Rand District Council of the AFM in Africa. According to Chikane, he "had been accused, on a number of times, by my church for my involvement in community projects and 'politics'".<sup>407</sup> His suspension letter from the West Rand District Council gives the reasons for his suspension as follow:

that you are still active in politics, but that on the 31st January 1980, you have promised the committee to be away from politics [sic]. The committee found that you are still appearing in the newspaper.<sup>408</sup>

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(Footnote Continued)

AFM in Africa, who were expected to comply to this condition before being ordained. Information given to me by Edgar Gschwend in an interview in Kempton Park on 2/10/88.

<sup>404</sup>Ibid., p.43.

<sup>405</sup>Ibid.

<sup>406</sup>Nowhere is her surname mentioned.

<sup>407</sup>Ibid., p.182.

<sup>408</sup>Ibid.

Clearly Chikane's interpretation of what it meant to be involved in "politics" and that of the AFM differed, because Chikane states that,

I made sure that I kept within the specifications of the Church's constitution and did not become a member of any political organisation, not even the local civic association.<sup>409</sup>

His suspension was upheld by the National Executive Council in October 1981, because he

did not keep the promise he made regarding the conditions of his ordination, and because this Council finds that there is no change in his attitude...".<sup>410</sup>

Chikane's suspension was to last for one year. According to Chikane when October 1982 came he was told that his reinstatement was on the agenda, but somehow he never heard from the AFM again except for a letter asking him to send back his credentials and ordination certificate.<sup>411</sup> However, Chikane remained and still is a member of the AFM in Africa.

In September 1982 Chikane became full time co-ordinator of the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT), and in 1983 was appointed Director of ICT.<sup>412</sup> In July 1987 he was

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<sup>409</sup>Ibid., p.64.

<sup>410</sup>Ibid., p.77.

<sup>411</sup>Ibid., p.183.

<sup>412</sup>Ibid.

appointed secretary general of the South African Council of Churches (SACC).<sup>413</sup>

A study of the two black leaders, Richard Ngidi and Frank Chikane, clearly reveals two contrasting biographies. On the one hand there is Ngidi who was not raised in the AFM in Africa but who joined it when he was thirty five. On the other hand Chikane was born and raised in the AFM in Africa. Ngidi was an evangelist effecting spiritual renewal in the AFM in Africa, whereas Chikane had a prophetic ministry compelled by the context in which he lived. Ngidi was totally apolitical, perhaps even anti-political, while Chikane saw his political activities as part of his prophetic calling. Ngidi was held in high esteem by the leadership of the AFM. Chikane, in stark contrast was defrocked by them. Could it be that the older Ngidi and younger Chikane symbolize the increasing tension between the older and younger generations in the AFM in Africa?

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<sup>413</sup> The AFM is opposed to and not a member of the SACC.



## CHAPTER 3: RACISM, APARTHEID AND MISSIONARY POLICY

## Pentecostalism and Racism

Robert M. Anderson in his study of American Pentecostalism, mentions the fact that,

It was almost exclusively from among these ethnically heterogeneous struggling working classes and impoverished unemployed that the Pentecostal movement drew its following in the urban areas of the nation.<sup>414</sup>

Despite such ethnic diversity one of the outstanding characteristics of this early Pentecostal revival was the fellowship between whites and negroes.<sup>415</sup> Pentecostal historian, Vinson Synan notes that

...what began as a local revival in a Negro church became of interest to people all over the nation, regardless of race. In a short while the majority of the attendants were white...<sup>416</sup> This striking interracial phenomenon occurred in the very years of America's most racist period, those from 1890 to 1920. In an age of Social Darwinism, Jim Crowism, and general white supremacy, the fact that Negroes and whites worshipped together in virtually equality among the pentecostals was a significant exception to prevailing racial attitudes. Even more significant is the fact that this interracial accord took place among the very groups that had traditionally been most at odds, the poor whites and the poor blacks.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.122.

<sup>415</sup> Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>416</sup> Synan, Vinson: The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961, p.109.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., p.165.

Students of early North American Pentecostalism all agree that during the early development of Pentecostalism no racial segregation existed. Says Anderson,

In a remarkable display of amity that ran against the prevailing winds of Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism, old-stock American, Scandinavian, German, Italian and Russian, black and brown, red and yellow together achieved a new sense of dignity and community in fully integrated Pentecostal services.<sup>418</sup>

Apparently Charles Fox Parham, one of the early leaders of Pentecostalism, held integrated meetings throughout the lower Midwest for years.<sup>419</sup> Not only in the Midwest and the western reaches of the South, but also in the deep South, integrated meetings were common. What makes all this so remarkable, is the fact that all of this happened against the background of a very racist North American society.

Jonathan Perkins, a Methodist minister attended Pentecostal services in Wichita, Kansas, in 1909 and went away in disgust over the failure of those in charge to "...keep niggers in their place."<sup>420</sup> Pioneer Fred Bosworth, pastor of a Pentecostal church in Dallas in the years before

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<sup>418</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p.122.

<sup>419</sup>Ibid, p.123

However, Parham separated the whites on one side and blacks on another side. Source:  
Lovett, Leonard: "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement" in Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins. Plainfield: Logos, 1975, p.133.

<sup>420</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

and after 1912, was beaten by local whites for befriending blacks.<sup>421</sup> One can also detect clear racial overtones in the press, as they ridiculed the revivalists. The New York American of 3 December 1906 reported:

Faith Gives Quaint Sect New Languages to convert Africa. Votaries of Odd Religion Nightly see 'Miracles' in West Side Room. Led by Negro Elder. The leaders of this strange movement are for the most part Negroes.<sup>422</sup>

To Anderson the most remarkable manifestation of pentecostal progressivism was its interracial, multi-ethnic composition.

This was in itself a radical criticism of prevailing race relations and a radical departure from them.<sup>423</sup>

Unfortunately as time progressed the Pentecostals succumbed to racism and racial segregation.<sup>424</sup> Say MacRobert,

Just as infants are unconscious of racial and colour distinctions until those "older and wiser" infect them with prejudice, so also the Pentecostal movement enjoyed several years of racial harmony until the divisions on the basis of colour, which had split the older denominations in America, led to the segregation of white from black Pentecostals.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>421</sup>Perkins, Eunice M.: Fred Francis Bosworth: His Life Story. Detroit, 1930, p.69-70.

<sup>422</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>423</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>424</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., pp.60-94.

<sup>425</sup>Ibid., p.87.

Within a decade of the initial Pentecostal revival, the movement, aside from its fragmentation into innumerable minor factions, had split into three major doctrinal segments: Second Work Trinitarians, Finished Work Trinitarians, and Unitarians (who were all of the Finished Work persuasion).<sup>426</sup> Within another two decades the colour line had been drawn through all three segments. Unlike the principal doctrinal controversies, the race issue did not arise in the movement as a whole at any particular time. Rather it emerged in one denomination after another beginning early in the life of the movement and reaching a peak in the 1920's, but it did not permanently split the Oneness wing until the mid-1930's.<sup>427</sup> MacRobert is confident that,

not only was colour a significant factor in the split over the Finished Work teaching, it was the central and in some cases the sole reason for one division after another in every section of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup>The controversy arose over the proper formula to be used in administering water baptism, but developed into a debate on the nature of the Godhead that divided the movement into Trinitarian and unitarian wings. See: Anderson, op. cit., pp. 176-194.

<sup>427</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>428</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.66.

According to Pentecostal periodicals and leaders it is clear that nearly all Pentecostal assemblies did have a distinct ethnic character (most still do).<sup>429</sup>

Although nothing of his underlying racial prejudices evidenced itself during the initial dynamic phase of the Pentecostal Movement, the early white leader Charles F. Parham, made no secrets about it later on. He also repeated the racist teachings of the "British Israel" movement.<sup>430</sup> By the mid-20's, Parham was writing articles for the racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic periodical of Gerald B. Winrod.<sup>431</sup> Hollenweger states that Parham was a convinced follower of the Ku Klux Klan, to whom he referred as "those splendid men".<sup>432</sup> However this was not the position of the majority of Pentecostals as leading Pentecostal periodicals advised their readers to avoid the Klan.<sup>433</sup> However, although

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>430</sup> They developed the theory that the British and "kindred peoples" were the descendants of the ten tribes of the house of Israel which had been taken into captivity in Assyria.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., p.190. Unfortunately the name of the periodical is not mentioned.

<sup>432</sup> Hollenweger, Walter: Pentecost between Black and White. Belfast: Christian Journals, 1974, p. 19. See also Anderson op. cit., p190.

<sup>433</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p. 191.

they criticized their violent nativism, nothing was said about its racial and religious policies.

MacRobert states that all of the white Pentecostal leaders sooner or later separated themselves from Seymour and Azusa. "Their rationalisations for doing so varied as did the time of their leaving, but ultimately the whites split away from Seymour and their black religious origins.<sup>434</sup> Douglas Nelson correctly remarks,

Parham repudiated Seymour's fellowship, Lum took his newspaper. Durham occupied his building: each one scorned Seymour's leadership and dismissed the revolutionary new body of equal believers.<sup>435</sup>

Anderson reports about the Assemblies of God,

Since 1916, except for a few black faces here and there in urban congregations of the Northeast, the Assemblies have remained a white man's church.<sup>436</sup>

The Church of God (Cleveland) also simply conformed to the racist mores of Southern society. For example, a resolution was adopted in 1926 by them, stipulating that "the General Overseer of the black congregations always be a white man..."<sup>437</sup> MacRobert laconically remarks,

Thus, the white dominated Church of God who were so willing to suffer persecution for the sake of doctrine,

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<sup>434</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.64.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>437</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.67.

conformed without any visible resistance to the racism of the South, and even ensured the continued domination of blacks by whites in their organisation.<sup>438</sup>

It was only in 1966 that the Church of God abolished its separate 'coloured assembly', and deleted all references to colour from its minutes and integrated the black congregations.<sup>439</sup>

Morris E. Golder, a historian of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, is cited to have said about his denomination:

There was no distinction made as to color in the beginning; for... the outpouring of the Spirit of God wiped away ALL racial barriers. However, the more the brethren moved out of the realm of the spiritual into that of the natural, color did become not only an issue, but a 'divise issue' at that...<sup>440</sup>

Vinson Synon admits that when the "Pentecostal Fellowship of North America" was formed in 1948 at Des Moines, Iowa, to "demonstrate to the world the essential unity of Spirit-baptized believers, fulfilling the prayers of the Lord Jesus 'that they all may be one'..." not a single Negro denomination was invited to join. In 1965 the Fellowship numbered seventeen denominations - all white.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., footnote 34, p.121.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., p.88.

It must be mentioned that although the Pentecostals were largely organized into racially separate fellowships, this did not mean that there was no contact between the races. They visited each others' services, held joined evangelistic campaigns and conventions etc.

This practice of 'fellowshipping' often transcended racial barriers, especially in the Northern urban areas, but elsewhere as well. Integrated Pentecostal meetings continued to be common even after the organizational separation of the races.<sup>442</sup>

MacRobert sums it up well, saying,

Thus, the racially integrated Pentecostal movement which was brought to birth among the black Holiness community in Los Angeles was rapidly segregated and conformed to the racist norms of American society and of the American churches. White Pentecostals were unwilling to challenge the racist laws and mores of the United States or to stand up to the criticism of the mainline denominations who sought to discredit them by pointing to their interracial character and black roots. Instead, they yielded to the pressures of segregated American society and the apartheid of American Christianity, and pointed heavenward when challenged on the question of origins. The divisions in the Pentecostal movement were caused by (or justified in terms of) many interrelated factors - disagreements over doctrine, struggles for power and dominance, desire to achieve 'respectability', social diversity and geographic location - but the end result demonstrated that white Pentecostals did not wish to maintain an interracial movement, submit to black leadership, or recognise the black origins of their movement.<sup>443</sup>

This excursus on the development of segregation in Pentecostalism in the United States provides a necessary

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<sup>442</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>443</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.76.



comparative background for examining the same phenomenon in the AFM in South Africa.

### The AFM and Racism

Although the earlier Pentecostal meetings in South Africa were multiracial, as soon as the movement became institutionalised as the AFM Church, in accordance with the racial practices of the day, it organized racially segregated services and eventually churches. In the minutes of one of the very first Executive Council meetings held on Thursday night, 17th September 1908, we read:

Br. Lake draws the attention of the meeting on the necessity of acquiring adequate accomodation for the holding of services in Doornfontein especially for the Coloured people.<sup>444</sup>

Whether there was a hidden racial motive behind this suggestion is a possibility. Perhaps John Lake realised that at that stage it would be practically better to hold separate services for the black people in their own language.

That Lake was a proponent of racial segregation is clear. Lindsay reports how Lake was invited by the Premier of the Union, President Louis Botha, to visit him in Pretoria after Lake impressed him highly with his sound advice and help during the "African fever" that ravaged

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<sup>444</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 17/9/1908, p. 1.

parts of Northern Transvaal in 1910.<sup>445</sup> Alexander Lake, son of John G. Lake, in a book about his father, wrote as follows in this regard:

In 1910, when I was seventeen.... the question of a native policy for the new Union was vital and pressing, and Botha and other prominent South Africans such as Generals Jan Smuts and Christian de Wet, occasionally came to the Johannesburg home of my missionary father, Dr. John G. Lake, for advice. These men always knelt and prayed before starting discussions, and they closed each meeting with a prayer of thanks. Sometimes they'd sit for a while, telling stories of answers to prayer.<sup>446</sup>

Accordingly Lake was invited by Botha to outline a native policy and submit it to the Government.

At his (Botha's) request, I outlined a native policy and submitted it to the Government. On receipt of this I was invited to come to Cape Town and address the Parliament on this issue.<sup>447</sup> I did so - something remarkable for an American in a foreign country. I framed the policy in harmony with our American policy involving the Indian tribes, having as an example the mistakes of the United States and other nations in regard to their handling of the native nations. This policy, as outlined by me, was practically adopted by the Boer party in toto.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>445</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., pp.35-36. The writer compiled this book by mostly using data gathered during personal interviews with Lake. Although this book is hardly objective, I believe the historical events are authentic.

<sup>446</sup>Nielsen, Charles: The Pentecostal Herald. 3rd Quarter, 1978. Review of Lake's sons book called Your Prayers are always answered.

<sup>447</sup>Sundkler, op. cit., p.54, mentions that no traces of this address could be found in Hansard and that probably Lake only addressed some Parliamentary Committee.

<sup>448</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.36.

Unfortunately no documentation exists on the exact nature of Lake's proposals or exactly what he regarded as the "mistakes" other nations made in regard to their racial policies.

Nevertheless, never in his wildest dreams would Lake have foreseen that the practical arrangement he advocated would change into the rigid apartheid ideology. The incident when he met Letwaba for the first time serves as a good example of his racial aptitude and goodwill towards blacks,

Lake put his arm around the black man's neck and kissed him, calling him 'My brother', while many of the unconverted white men in the hall booed and hissed at him, shouting, 'Bah! Fancy kissing a black man! He may be your brother but he's not mine,' and similar expressions of disapproval and contempt.<sup>449</sup>

Lake's support of racial segregation nevertheless seems to have been in harmony with the other Pentecostal pioneers. At a meeting of the trustees on Friday 6th November 1908 they "...decided that the baptism of Natives shall in future take place after the baptism of the white people".<sup>450</sup> From this it is clear that previous church services and baptisms were multiracial. As they baptized by immersion it was most probably "hygienic" reasons that made them take this decision. On the 23rd February 1909, Lehman informed the

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<sup>449</sup>Lindsay, op. cit., p.43.

<sup>450</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, p.10, 6/11/1908

Council that a suitable place in Doornfontein had been obtained at a rent of four pounds and ten shillings per month.

He states that in the matter of finances this work would be independent of the (white) Tabernacle.<sup>451</sup>

Driven by their feelings of white supremacy, the early white leaders followed closely a policy of paternalism. The following serves to prove it:

1) It was specifically stated that only "...a white Superintendent or Superintendents be appointed by the Council over the Native Work."<sup>452</sup>

2) When the first elders of the AFM were appointed on Tuesday March 2, 1909, there were no blacks amongst them.<sup>453</sup> A possible reason for this might be the fact that in their segregation oriented thinking the black members of the AFM were not considered to be a part of the white church but formed another section on their own. Later on black elders were appointed for the "Native section".

3) On 6 May 1910 P.L. le Roux handed over resolutions passed at the Conference of Natives held at Bloemfontein on 8th April 1910. One of these resolutions was that,

the work amongst the natives for the time being be conducted by a 'Native Council' consisting of three European members (bro. J.G. Lake, P.L. le Roux, T.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 23/2/1909, p. 27.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 11/6/ 1909, p.39.

<sup>453</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, March 2, 1909.

Schwede), assisted by three Native overseers (Bro. Mowane, Letwaba and A. Oliphant).

However, it was clearly stated that all decisions made by this native Council were subject to revision by the white executive Council of Johannesburg.<sup>454</sup> This "native Council" was in fact more of a "multi-racial council" as 50% of its members were whites.

4). In accord with the policy of the NGK at that time, the white church was spoken of as the "mother church". In a letter written by E.M. Letwaba and printed in the Comforter, he assured the readers that "We pray for you and all the dear Saints in the Mother Church at 88 Bree Street, Jhb."<sup>455</sup> It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that the terminology "Mother Church" and "Daughter Church" has no biblical foundation. Its usage was historically used to underline the superiority and seniority of the one church over the other. Adonis is quite adamant about this, saying

Hierdie standpunte moet as onaanvaarbaar van die hand gewys word omdat die terminologie "moeder- en dogterkerk" al 'n aanduiding is van die afhanklikheid en ondergeskikte posisie van die sogenaamde "dogterkerke" aan die blanke "moederkerk".<sup>456</sup>

5) The minutes of the Annual General Conference held on Thursday November 13, 1913 states:

During the afternoon session the Native elders Ngobese, Lutuli and Oliphant with several others were

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<sup>454</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 6 May 1910.

<sup>455</sup> Comforter, October 1913, p. 12

<sup>456</sup> Adonis, op. cit., p. 205.

present. They were officially informed of what the Conference had done in regard to appointments and resolutions affecting the Native Work.<sup>457</sup>

It is clear that certain decisions were made for the blacks and that their only option was to obey.

However, it must be pointed out that the policy to appoint white missionary overseers was not only done to uphold the domination of the white church over the blacks, but in line with the expectation of the government. It was the policy of the government that local black workers had to work under the supervision of white overseers in order to enjoy official recognition. Without official recognition it was of course impossible to acquire ground for church building and other important matters. An entry in the minutes of the Executive Council dated December 23, 1910, confirms this:

a letter of the Magistrate of Newcastle d.d. 16 Dec. is read in reply to that of the Secretary respecting Mneli Ngobesi stating that an Inward (sic) Pass was refused because<sup>458</sup> he was under no apparent local supervision.

The same was true in Zululand.

Zululand roept om een blanke opziener. Onze Bro. E.P. Nkomo, een zeer vertrouwbare Naturelle arbeider, zegt dat het hem onmogelijk is om in sommige plaatsen naby de autoriteiten te komen, en zij zullen ons geen voorrechten toekennen, eer zij onze blanke herder

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<sup>457</sup> Minutes Annual General Conference, November 13, 1913

<sup>458</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1910, p.71.

zien.<sup>459</sup>

In the convention report of January 31, 1916, printed in the Comforter, mention is made of the Native Work in Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique). However,

The work was in danger of being throttled by the authorities, as there was no European representative of the Mission there and there are many regulations to be observed, not the least of which is that there shall be a European Superintendent in each district.<sup>460</sup>

This clearly serves to illustrate that a paternalistic policy undergirded with racial overtones was sometimes forced upon the church by the State. Not that it would have been much different, in all probability, if it was not regulated by the State.

On March 7, 1914 a resolution was passed by the white Executive Council that once again demonstrated the strong racial overtones that were present in the AFM right from the start:

Bro. Moffat moved seconded by Bro. van Vuuren and carried unanimously 'That this meeting place upon record its strong disapproval of the practise of kissing between white and Native which has sprung up in the work in Basotholand, and in future discourages the continuance of the practice as being highly inexpedient - 1Corinthians 6:12, 10:23.'<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>459</sup>De Trooster, April 1921, p. 12

<sup>460</sup>Comforter January 1, 1916, p. 13

<sup>461</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 7/3/1914, p.143.

Not much is said about the nature of this kissing, whether it was between different sexes, or not. Most probably it was in accordance with what the Apostle Paul commanded in 1Cor. 16:20, "Greet each other with a holy kiss". This practise is still in use by some of the older pentecostal people as a sign of affection and brotherly love. Very interesting is the Council's selective use of Scripture.

The question of multiracial church services compelled the AFM to formulate their first policy in regard to racial matters.

On Friday afternoon the question of Natives and Coloureds attending the European services was brought forward and proved to be a very knotty question. The discussion continued throughout Friday afternoon without reaching a decision.<sup>462</sup>

The very important discussion was continued the next day.

On Saturday morning the Colour Question was resumed and the following resolution was carried on the motion of Bro. Vogel, seconded by Bro. Henning: 'That we do not teach or encourage social equality between Whites and Natives. We recognise that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. We therefore preach the Gospel equally to all peoples, making no distinctions. We wish it to be generally known that our White, Coloured and Native peoples have their separate places of worship, where the Sacraments are administered to them. We further recommend that in the Central Tabernacle and other assemblies if desirable, certain seats be reserved for coloured persons who may attend there. Further, that in the case of certain worthy coloured families attending at the Central Tabernacle the matter be left in the

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<sup>462</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, July 6, 1917, p. 34.



hands of the Spiritual Committee.<sup>463</sup>

This committee ruled in matters such as ethical and dogmatic issues, and consisted of certain white Executive Council members.

It is interesting to note that no Scriptures were quoted by these fundamentalist pioneers to substantiate their policy. Usually in an important matter such as this they would lean heavily on a verse or portion of Scripture. Furthermore, their opening statement forms a direct antithesis with the second one. On the one hand they oppose social equality between Whites and Blacks, but contrarily recognize that God is no respecter of persons. So deep-seated was their historical, cultural and racial bias that they inadvertently formulated this contradiction without even noticing it. What made this easier was the fact that this policy was, as we shall note later, completely in accordance with that of the NGK and fitted well into the racial framework maintained by the ruling government of the day. Coloureds were allowed to attend but nothing is said about blacks. At the same time they made a distinction between "Coloureds", and "worthy Coloureds". One wonders what their criterion was.

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<sup>463</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, July 7, 1917, pp. 35-36.

Soon they would find out that this policy was not so easy to enforce in multi-ethnic South Africa, as the case of Br. Botes (a white) proved:

...the case of Br. Botes, a worker reported not legally married to his wife, a coloured woman. It was thought wise to call the brother before the Spiritual Committee.<sup>464</sup>

How this was resolved is not documented. Apparently their policy of segregation was not strictly adhered to in Durban, as the following extract indicates:

Reported by Br. Kemp of the existing difficulty between the Europeans and Natives. He suggested that the two works be separated, which they accepted.<sup>465</sup>

Although no strict policy of segregation was followed in Durban it appears that the white and black people each had their own leader.

A good example of how the existing political status quo forced them to compromise is documented:

At 10 am a good number were gathered together and conference was led to speak on the subject of the behaviour and attitude between European and Natives. The question was discussed from all possible sides. Bro. Henning pointed out how he was attacked by outsiders because we allow natives to mix up with Europeans in public places of worship, also the shaking of hands with natives in public places and streets etc. Many of the workers related their experience with the Natives. Bro. P.L. Le Roux pointed out that there was a difference between the workers that preached the Gospel to the Europeans only and those that gave more of their time to the Native work. The missionary that works

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<sup>464</sup>Ibid., 9/7/1917.

<sup>465</sup>Ibid., 19/1/1921. p.78.

among the Natives only, should be in such a place that they should be prepared to shake hands with the Natives anywhere, not so with the European workers, they should exercise the utmost care so that the unconverted should not get the opportunity to blaspheme the name of the Lord.<sup>466</sup>

Reporting on the August conference Le Roux added:

As for social intercourse, there existed no such teaching of social equality as far as he knew. It was then decided that the European Overseers and Workers in charge of the Native work, should teach the native never to be the first to offer his hand to a white person, or to approach them first in public places, but to wait until the white man made the first advance.<sup>467</sup>

William F.P. Burton, a British missionary to Africa wrote an article for the Comforter titled: "Is die Swart Rasse onder 'n vloek?" (Are the black races under a curse?).<sup>468</sup> As this was clearly one of the many misconceptions prejudiced whites had of the black people, he strongly refuted them.

Die ekskuus is gewoonlik dat die swart rasse vervloek is en dat hulle in alle opsigte as minderwaardig behandel moet word. Die naturel word beskou as n moeilike, maar onvermybare las, alleen bruikbaar om harde en ongeskoolde arbeid te doen. Die argument wat aangevoer word om die teorie dat die swart rasse vervloek is te rugsteun, word uit die Skrif geneem en dit word beweer dat hulle die afstammelinge is van Gam, die seun van Noag. Dit word gese dat, 1) Gam se onbehoorlike gedrag teenoor sy dronk ou vader het op hom en sy afstammelinge die vloek van die slaafdom gebring (Gen.9:24). 2) Gam beteken 'swartagtig, donker gekleurd'. 3) Dit word hieruit dan afgelei dat die donker gekleurde rasse almal nageslagte moet wees van

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<sup>466</sup> Ibid., 3/8/1921, p. 509.

<sup>467</sup> The Comforter, August 1921, p. 2.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., September 1936, pp. 5-6. Article was published in Afrikaans after being translated from English.

Gam, en daarom dan onderhorig aan die wit nasie, die sogenoemde afstammeling van Sem en Jafet (Gen.26:27).

The whole purpose of Burton's article is to refute this false theory, and this he ably did. Unfortunately his closing paragraph is almost an antithesis to his previous statements:

Ons wil nie vir 'n oomblik gemengde huwelike of derglike samelewing tussen swart en wit aanmoedig nie. Daar is ver te groot 'n verskil van taal en gewoonte om ooit soiets 'n sukses te maak.

This again clearly illustrates the very important role that culture plays in the selective hermeneutics used by people. The apparent wrong exegesis of Gen. 9, had nothing to do with the lack of formal theological training of the early Pentecostals. The same biblical-theological justifications for their purely ideological policies and practises were used by the "learned" and theologically trained NGK "dominees" and missionaries.<sup>469</sup>

Mission Superintendent Wright had high appreciation for the attitude of the Afrikaans-speaking whites towards blacks.

...there is a wonderful spirit of Missionary enthusiasm amongst our people in spite of the general antagonistic feelings towards the natives in South Africa.<sup>470</sup>

He wrote in the Comforter:

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<sup>469</sup>Adonis, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>470</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 23/3/1937.

I am greatly pleased as I travel amongst the European people doing my missionary work to see that such a good feeling exists between the European people and the natives.

Veteran missionary J.R. Gschwend, the father of the present Missions Director, did not share Wright's optimism. Forthrightly he declared:

Hoewel die meeste Witmense in hoogmoed op die swart rasse neersien as minderwaardige skepsels bly die feit nog staan dat die Heer die volle prys betaal het op Golgotha deur Sy bloed te stort vir hulle bevryding.<sup>471</sup>

Writing about white peoples' racial prejudice and using terms like "hoogmoed" and "neersien" in 1943 must have taken courage. Like an Old Testament prophet he lashed out:

Dit is jammer dat dit lyk asof daar so baie witmense is wat skyn te vergeet dat saligmaking in Christus alleen is en nie in die kleur van die vel nie.

During the April 1944 Workers Conference the following important resolutions were taken:

- 1) Race Relations: The mission stands for segregation. The fact that the Native, Indian and Coloured is saved does not render him European.
- 2) Communism: The strongest antidote for this problem has been found to be the Holy Ghost.
- 5) Native education: The mission stands for a lower education but is definitely against a higher education.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Gschwend, J.R.: "Wit en Swart" in the Comforter, October 1943.

<sup>472</sup> Minutes of the General Conference, April 1944, pp. 42-43.

Although the AFM followed the policy of segregation all the previous years, this was the first time they expressly used the term "segregation". Their antidote against Communism is typical of their simplistic, almost "unworldly" approach towards many of the contemporary issues of their day. Never once did it occur to them that they were indirectly "fueling" communism by their blatant racism. Their educational policy was a virtual copy of the Government's, indeed, a product of the rising white Nationalism of the Afrikaner in the forties, and of the psychological scars of "white-poorism". Dr. Verwoerd spelled out the true motive behind this government policy, saying,

We should not give the natives an academic education as some people are prone to do. If we do this... who is going to do the manual labour in the country? ... I am in thorough agreement with the view that we so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country.<sup>473</sup>

That any church could agree with this blatant discrimination and even take it up in their policy is unthinkable, yet it serves as a good example of how easily a church can "conform to this worldly system", without even realising it.

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<sup>473</sup>Collins, C. & Christie, P.: "Bantu Education, Apartheid Ideology, or Labour Reproduction" in Comparative Education, Vol.18, 1982, p.63.

### The Impact of Apartheid on the AFM:

In the Constitutions of the two Boer Republics, Transvaal and Orange Free State, founded by the Voortrekkers after the Great Trek<sup>474</sup>, equality between Whites and Blacks was specifically outlawed. P.J.S. de Klerk provide the motive for this,

The Bantu, after all, belong to a lower race, which cannot be placed on an equal footing with White, either in the family or in politics, or in the Church. No, here are lines drawn by the Creator Himself, which man may not wipe out on his own accord, without it having evil effects.<sup>475</sup>

Most of the earlier Pentecostals were raised within this cultural milieu and worldview.

It is not clear when exactly the policy of the NGK regarding racial separatism was taken into the political arena. De Gruchy and Lombard agree that this process was connected with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and their struggle against British imperialism in the Boer war (1899-1902).<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>474</sup>Two of the most important causes leading to the Great Trek are to be found in the emancipation of the Cape slaves in 1834 and the liberal policies of the new English Government of the Cape Colony in regard to the Khoikhoi.

<sup>475</sup>De Klerk, P.J.S.: Kerk en Sending in Suid Afrika. Amsterdam, 1923, p.167.

<sup>476</sup>De Gruchy, John W.: The Church Struggle in South Africa. Cape Town: David Philip, 1979, p.31.  
Lombard, R.T.J.: Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en Rassepolitiek met spesiale verwysing na die jare 1948 - 1961. Pretoria, 1974, p. 27.

British imperialism has a great deal to answer for; it helped spawn a nationalism whose racial policies have become as hideous to the world at large<sup>477</sup> as the war Britian waged against the Afrikaner.

But not only was it British imperialism that caused the Afrikaner's reaction, it was also the growing black nationalism.

The rise and development of Afrikaner nationalism requires to be seen primarily as a reaction against British imperialism on the one hand, and growing Black nationalism on the other.<sup>478</sup>

Johann Kinghorn's description of the Poor-White problem during the twenties and thirties throws more light on the fact that the AFM followed and morally supported the government of their day in regard to their racial policies.<sup>479</sup> Afrikaners in general did not understand the cities, they were very poor and lived alongside blacks in shanty towns. This was a major trial for them if one takes their historical and cultural backgrounds into consideration. They had to compete with the cheaper black labour, just as they shared disasterous living conditions with blacks. In this process the Afrikaners wrongly interpreted all their problems as interracial ones.

...the economic problem (of the poor white) was interpreted as an interracial problem...the problems that the whites (in this case almost exclusively

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<sup>477</sup>De Gruchy, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>478</sup>Adonis, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>479</sup>Kinghorn, Johann: Apartheidsteologie binne die Kerk. Stellenbosch, 1984, p.8.



Afrikaners) had to adapt to in the industrial city, was almost without exception seen as the 'black danger'.<sup>480</sup>

Taking the Afrikaner's feeling of white supremacy and socio-economic factors in consideration, one can understand why the Afrikaans speaking churches (AFM included) supported apartheid morally and theologically.

Not only were the AFM pioneers influenced by Afrikaner nationalism historically, culturally, politically and socio-economically in their racial policies, they followed the traditional Afrikaner ways that had strong religious overtones. Amongst the Voortrekkers and later in the two Afrikaner Republics, the identification of the Afrikaners with Israel had a prominent role in their theology.

According to De Gruchy the Afrikaners drew immense strength from this interpretation of history.

They detected a sacred thread running through all the events of their past, beginning with the Great Trek into the unknown (the exodus) and including the encounter with and victory over the black nations (Philistines), especially at the Battle of Blood River, where they entered into a sacred covenant with God, the entry into the promised land of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the encounter with the pursuing British. Though they believed defeat on the battlefield in 1902 was the judgement of God calling his people back to their covenant as his people, they knew it was not the cancellation of the call to be his people and bring light to the dark

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<sup>480</sup> Ibid., p.9. (Own translation from Afrikaans)

continent. Their struggle was not over. They still had that eschatological vision which anticipated once again the rebirth of a republic in which the Afrikaner would be free and undisputed ruler under the providence of the Almighty.<sup>481</sup>

The year 1948 had important political significance for southern African history. This was the year in which the National Party gained power under the leadership of Dr. D.F. Malan. "Apartheid" now officially became Party policy. Immediately the South African society began to be restructured in accordance with the ideology of apartheid, the constitutive doctrine of which was the maintenance of white supremacy in all areas of life.<sup>482</sup> Although discriminatory legislation against blacks existed long before 1948,<sup>483</sup> the practise of apartheid was now firmly put into place through an increasingly complex web of legislation.

From the beginning the Afrikaners used various arguments to justify their policy of apartheid. Apartheid as justified and defined by a National Party committee, which included amongst others the NGK theologian G.B.A. Gerdener, was

...a policy which sets itself the task of preserving and safeguarding the racial identity of the white population of the country; of likewise preserving and safeguarding the identity of the indigenous people as

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<sup>481</sup>De Gruchy, 1979. op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>482</sup>Adonis op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>483</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

separate racial groups, with opportunities to develop in selfgoverning units; of fostering the inculcation of national consciousness, self-esteem and mutual regard among the various races of the country.<sup>484</sup>

A further justification was that apartheid was an indispensable tool for the implementation of the white vocation to be guardians of the millions of "backward" black people.

In our attitude towards the Native the fundamental principle is the supremacy of the European population in a spirit of Christian trusteeship, utterly rejecting every attempt to mix the races.<sup>485</sup>

Historian F.A. van Jaarsveld says:

In studying South African history one is struck by the frequent reference by political leaders to the Afrikaner's belief in a divine calling. Pronouncements in this regard run like a golden thread through the fabric of Afrikaner history.<sup>486</sup>

Adonis maintains that

... from D.F. Malan in 1948 to P.J. Meyer (Chairman of 'die Broederbond') in 1970 Whites have made constant references to this fancied religious foundation of apartheid, a conviction that has its roots in the long NGK tradition of seeking to furnish a supposedly biblical-theological justification for this purely ideological policy and practice.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Troup, F.: South Africa: An Historical Introduction. London, 1975, p. 298.

<sup>485</sup> Kruger, D.W.: South African Parties and Policies: 1910-1960. Cape Town, 1960, p. 71.

As before, the AFM stood perfectly in line with the ruling governments' policies. During the 1948 Workers Council meetings they just reconfirmed their position in regard to racial matters as spelled out so clearly in 1944.

Maatskaplike gelykheid tussen Blanke, Indiers, Kleurlinge en Naturelle word nie deur die Sending geleer nie en moet geheel en al ontmoedig word. Ons erken dat God geen aannemer van persoon is nie, en dat in elke volk daar diegene is wat Hom vrees, daarom preek ons die Evangelie vrymoediglik aan alle volke sonder om n uitsondering te maak. Laat dit egter algemeen bekend wees, dat in die Sending voorsiening gemaak word vir ons Blanke, Indier, Gekleurde en Naturelle lede om in hulle afsonderlike aanbiddingsplekke die Here te dien, waar daar vir hulle die sakramente bedien word.<sup>488</sup>

Time and again when trying to justify their racial policy the AFM would confess that "God is no respecter of persons". This just indicates how deep seated their racial prejudice was. They never realised that by this policy they chose to be "respectors of persons"!

An article in the Comforter summed up the situation in South Africa correctly when it said:

A great many South Africans in this enlightened days know very little about the customs, traditions and religion of the black people by whom they are surrounded. The bantu remains unknown, misknown and misunderstood.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Minutes of the Workers Council, April 1948.

<sup>489</sup> Cherer, Penny: "Superstitions in the Bantu", in the Comforter, October 1949, p.11.

Unfortunately the writer then continued by making this monocultural ethnocentric remark:

"To get to know the black man...one must observe the black man when he thinks himself unnoticed, unwatched, and share his intimate life in all its cruelty, terrible and terrifying and infinitely sad in its stark reality.

This last observation reflects the typical image white people had of black people in 1949.

The fact that the AFM followed the ruling government's policies was confirmed in 1950 by Vice-President Gerrie Wessels, who later became a National Party Senator. Reporting on his visit to the World Pentecostal Conference in London, he pointed out possible future problem areas with affiliation to this body:

Die Nie-Blankes: Hieruit kan heelwat probleme vir ons in Suid Afrika gebore word. Ons land se houding (en daarmee ook die Apostoliese Geloofsending van Suid Afrika) teenoor die nie-blankes word deur verdraaide persberiggewing verkeerd verstaan. Wat sou gebeur indien 'n nie-blanke uit Suid Afrika ons blanke Christene sou aankla of berispe by die Wêreldkonferensie? Sal dit moontlik wees om die Konferensie sonder kleurskeidslyn na ons land te nooi? <sup>490</sup>

When the respected Pentecostal leader Donald Gee visited South Africa in 1950, he remarked that, "Racial

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<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 1953, p.6.

differences can be the poison at the heart of South Africa's happiness as a nation".<sup>491</sup>

In 1954 the Executive Council decided to appoint a commission to formulate the AFM's view on the apartheid's policy of the government. To serve on this commission were Brs. J.T. du Plessis, J. Gillingham and P. Fourie.<sup>492</sup> Unfortunately no exposition of their findings seems to be recorded. They also decided:

...op voorstel van Br. Schoeman en gesekondeer deur Br. Wessels dat ons applikasie maak by SABRA (South African Buro of Racial Affairs) om as lede-liggaam opgeneem te word en ook by Distrikrade aanbeveel om as lede-liggame aan te sluit.<sup>493</sup>

Apparently their application were successful, as it was later decided that J.T. du Plessis was to be the representative of the AFM at SABRA.<sup>494</sup>

In 1955 a leading article on racism was written by Chas P. du Plessis and published in the Comforter.<sup>495</sup> This represented a fair view of the AFM's viewpoint. According to Du Plessis, race relationships between black and white is

<sup>491</sup>Gee, Donald. In the Comforter, June 1950, p.4.

<sup>492</sup>Ibid., 14/4/1954.

<sup>493</sup>Ibid., 3/11/1954.

<sup>494</sup>Ibid., May 1955.

<sup>495</sup>Du Plessis, Chas P.: "The Church and Racism", in the Comforter, September 1955, pp.14-15,18.

"problem no.1" in South Africa. In writing about it he said that he would,

merely try to underline a few cardinal principles and point Christians to what we honestly believe to be the Scriptural aspects of this very vexing state of affairs.

He continued by pointing out the "differences and distinctions" that do exist like the "difference in size" of the brain of a normal European and that of a native, the fact that "emotionally the white man is far more sensitive than the black". Also, it may be "asserted that few natives indeed attain the same spiritual standards as the ordinary European Christian". In rationalizing these differences between the races he used as Scriptural basis, Deut.32:8; Acts 17:26. Free "intermingling" and "intermarrying" and association at will, will ultimately end in Communism.

Apartheid along the lines that we have tried herein to point out, must always remain - in the Church as well as outside of it.

Softening his approach a little he added:

The idea that we Europeans are a superior race and the consequent contemptuous attitude which many adopt toward the Non-European, are most unchristian and deplorable.

But summing it up, he said,

The native and the European belong to two different races and should always remain so. Any efforts to remove the divinely ordained racial differences should be avoided. Intermingling and integration of the races beyond what is unavoidably necessary for economic reasons, mutual assistance and harmonious co-existence, should be firmly resisted as being contrary to God's will.

This was the racial status quo that the AFM maintained until late into the seventies.

In 1978 the first clear notes against racial segregation were sounded when a working paper was accepted with the title "Eenheid van die Kerk".<sup>496</sup> This study was expanded in 1983 with an additional paper called "Algemene Lidmaatskap":

Enige bepaling wat in die kerklike wetboek mag wees wat aparte aanbidding op grond van velkleur afdwing, sal verdwyn.<sup>497</sup>

In the light of the above it is useful to reflect and compare the development of racism in North American Pentecostalism with that in South Africa. Why, for example did the originally integrated and multiracial Pentecostal Movement in the USA develop into a segregated church? Black Pentecostal historian, Leonard Lovett is convinced that

When whites could not 'Europeanise' pentecostalism (Parham led the way by speaking in derogatory terms of certain excesses at the Azusa meeting) and purge it of its 'Africanisms', they separated and formed their own denominations. Thus white pentecostals conceded to the pressure of a racist society.<sup>498</sup>

Hollenweger tried to answer the same question by saying:

The reason for this development lies on the one hand in the loud criticism against Pentecostalism voiced by the mainline churches which tried to discredit Pentecostals by pointing to their lowly beginnings in a Negro Church, and on the other hand in the laws of the Southern States of the USA which have prohibited

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<sup>496</sup> Die Eenheid in die Kerk. Paper prepared by Dr. F. P. Moller for the Council for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy, 1978.

<sup>497</sup> Algemene Lidmaatskap. By the Council for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy, 11/3/1983, No. 95.

<sup>498</sup> MacRobert, op.cit., p. 88.



racially mixed meetings. It would therefore be unfair to blame the white Pentecostals alone for this development. They have simply adapted themselves to what was considered at that time to be American Protestantism.<sup>499</sup>

The situation in South Africa was not too different. George Fredrickson, in his comparative study of North American and South African history believes that

Forced racial separation... has constituted the most striking institutional expression of white<sup>500</sup> supremacy in both the United States and South Africa.

This statement makes the question whether there are similarities between the Pentecostals in South Africa and the USA in their genesis period, in regard to their racial feelings, virtually rhetorical. But some further comments are necessary in order to pinpoint important differences.

In both countries the glow and enthusiasm of the new "Holy Spirit baptism with speaking in other tongues" resulted initially in no colour-bar at all.<sup>501</sup> In both countries the integrated services appeared to be regarded by outsiders and critics as extraordinary and in stark contrast

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<sup>499</sup> Hollenweger, 1974, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

<sup>500</sup> Fredrickson, George M.: White Supremacy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.239.  
MacRobert's study of white racism in early pentecostalism enhances Fredrickson's viewpoint:  
MacRobert, The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA.

<sup>501</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.123. See also: Minutes of the Executive Council, 17/9/1908.

to the cultural and historical realities of that time.<sup>502</sup> Yet such mutual acceptance which existed between the races initially, changed as time passed. In both countries, as soon as the Pentecostals came under the searchlight of its critics, they shifted and adapted the racial policy of the existing order. Eventually their churches became racially segregated. Up to this day heterogeneous Pentecostal churches are the exception rather than the rule.<sup>503</sup> The North American magazine, Christianity Today attests to this observation by saying, "Black and white Pentecostals are still mostly segregated".<sup>504</sup>

Yet, there have been two decisive factors which have shaped the AFM which were not part of the North American experience: the Government policy of Apartheid and Afrikaner Nationalism, and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) missionary policy of separate ethnic churches. Historically, Pentecostals in South Africa were strongly influenced by the missions policy of the NGK, while in the USA no single Church denomination was so influential.

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<sup>502</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>503</sup>Personal observation after visiting hundreds of churches in the USA during 1980 - 1981.

<sup>504</sup>Christianity Today: "America's Pentecostals - Who they are". Oct. 1987, p.20.

### The Influence of the NGK Mission's Policy

As a reaction to the rejection, persecution, and continual humiliation they were subjected to as Pentecostals by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the AFM would not have intentionally implemented any ecclesiastical policy derived from the NGK.<sup>505</sup> However, the ecclesiastical background of two of the early prominent leaders of the AFM, former NGK missionary P.L. Le Roux and NGK "dominee" Johannes van der Wall, must have played a role. Nevertheless, much of the missionary policy of the NGK is clearly evident in the developments which led to the formation of the AFM in Africa.

In the period 1652-1795, the NGK generally neglected missionary work, because missions were regarded as the duty of the Dutch East India Company as the instituted government authority.<sup>506</sup> Keeping in mind that the Dutch East India Company, true to its character as commercial enterprise, had adopted profitmaking as priority, it follows logically that little actual missionary work was carried out among the autochthonous population.

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<sup>505</sup>This is probably also the reason why no documentation could be found in the AFM's archive to support the influence that the NGK mission's policy had on that of the AFM.

<sup>506</sup>Adonis, op. cit., pp.28-30.

The first European missionary sent to minister to the indigenous population in the Cape was the Moravian, George Schmidt, who in 1738 commenced his ministry at Genadendal, in the Cape Province.<sup>507</sup> Within ten years he had to stop, because his teaching was not only regarded as a threat to the theology and authority of the church, it was also seen as a threat to the social life of the settler community.<sup>508</sup>

Another factor which influenced missionary work in a very negative way was the monocultural ethnocentric attitude that the white people had of the local non-white population:

Vorts wat aangaet des natie hier te lande ofte dese inwoonders, is eenseer arm elendich volck na siel ende na lichaem; beroft van alle kennisse Godts; leven als het vee, so dat gij niet en kont bemeercken datse eenyge maniere van godtsdienst hebben ofte datter iets is, die sij eenige eer ofte dienst bewisen, maerschint indat stuck tusschen haer ende het onvernuftige vee van religie ofte godtsdienst geen onderscheijt...<sup>509</sup>

Smith mentions the result such racist views had, that the Khoi- khoi " steeds meer verbitterd werden tegen de blanke en hun godsdienst".<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>507</sup>De Gruchy, 1979, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>508</sup>Ibid.

<sup>509</sup>Potgieter, F.J.M.: "Ons Kerk in Kaapland." in Ons N.G.Kerk, gedenkboek by ons 3de Beufees, Stellenbosch, 1952, p.28-29.

<sup>510</sup>Adonis, op. cit., p.31.

From 1799 onwards, a number of foreign missionaries and mission societies played a significant role. Here we make a distinction between two types,

...there were missionaries such as J.T. van der Kemp and J. Phillips of the London Missionary Society (LMS), who consistently defended and strove to protect the rights of the autochthonous (sic) peoples among whom they lived and worked. On the other hand, there were also those who, following the example of the mission of the DRC, sacrificed the interests of the original local peoples on the altar of close cooperation with the colonial regime".<sup>511</sup>

The NGK gave attention to the issue of mission at their first official synodical gathering held at Cape Town on November 2, 1824. It was decided to initiate the office of "missionary" besides the office of "predikant".<sup>512</sup> Nico Smith regards this as the first step that later led to the forming of segregated assemblies.<sup>513</sup> Regarding this synodical gathering, Adonis mentions that,

...it became quickly evident on this occasion and in the years immediately following that the racial prejudice so prevalent among the members of the NGK would play a predominant role in the missionary policy and practice of this church.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>511</sup>Ibid., p.224.

<sup>512</sup>Dreyer, A: Kruisgesante in Suid Afrika. Kaapstad, 1927, p.10.

<sup>513</sup>Smith, 1973, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>514</sup>Adonis, op. cit., p.224.

At their third synod held in 1829, the Reverend Spyker asked whether it could be allowed that black and white Christians share the same communion table. According to the Commissioner of politics, the question was,

derogatoer aan de waardigheid van den christelijken godsdienst volgens welke leer geen onderscheid of aanzien van personen bij het bedienen en ontvangen van het sacrament des heiligen Avondsmaals mag worden erkend.<sup>515</sup>

The synod decided that,

dit voorstel geen deliberatie of beslissing....behoorde te maken, maar hetzelfde als een onwrikbaren stelregel op het onfeilbare Woord van God gegrond behoort aan te merken; dat bij gevolg, alle christenen en elke christen in het bijzonder verplicht is ooreenkomstig dezelve te denken en te handelen.<sup>516</sup>

Although it roundly condemned and rejected racial prejudice and discrimination as being in conflict with Scripture, subsequent developments soon provide clear evidence of a radical reversion to the older and more characteristic position on this matter.

The Great Trek (1834 - 1854) is regarded as a key event in the history of South Africa<sup>517</sup>. Although some people took part in the Great Trek for different reasons, the two most

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<sup>515</sup> Van der Walt, I.J.: Eiesoortige Kerkvorming as Missiologiese Probleem met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika. Potchefstroom: 1960: p. 422

<sup>516</sup> Ibid, p. 467

<sup>517</sup> Muller, F.J. (Ed.): 500 Jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis. Pretoria: Academica. 1968: p. 123, 125

important reasons are the emancipation of the Cape slaves in 1834 and the liberal policies of the new English government of the Colony with respect to the Khoikhoi. No wonder that in the constitutions of the two Boer Republics founded by the Voortrekkers, OFS and Transvaal, equality between blacks and whites was specifically outlawed. "Het volk wil geen gelijkstelling van gekleurden ingezetenen noch in kerk, noch in Staat"<sup>518</sup>. This racist policy of the two Republics was accepted and endorsed by the NGK. Logically the LMS was denied entrance to the Republics because it advocated racial equality. The German missionaries were preferred.<sup>519</sup>

At the NGK synod of 1857 it was decided to institute and support church apartheid on the grounds that the ecclesiastical separation of blacks and whites would further a more effective spreading of the Gospel among the "coloureds".

De Synode beschouwt het wenschlijk en schriftmatig, dat onze ledematen uit de Heidenen, in onze bestaande gemeentes opgenomen en ingelijfd worden, overal waar zulks geschieden kan; maar waar deze maatregel, ten gevolge van de zwakheid van sommigen, de vordering van de zaak van Christus onder de Heidenen, in de weg zoude staan, de gemeenten uit de Heidenen opgerigt, of nog op te rigten, hare Christelijke voorregten in een afzonderlijk gebouw of gesticht genieten zal.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>518</sup>Van der Walt, op. cit., pp.499-500.

<sup>519</sup>Adonis, op. cit., p.52.

<sup>520</sup>Van der Walt, op. cit., p.473.

G.B.A. Gerdener is of the opinion that the NGK officially decided during the synod of 1857 to make its policy one of segregated churches.<sup>521</sup>

The planting of churches has always been an important goal of missions in the NGK. In this church-planting approach to mission the NGK has been influenced to a greater or lesser degree by various confessional and missionary traditions: Netherlands Reformed, German Pietist, Anglo-Saxon and German Lutheran. They viewed the concept of "independent church" more in the sense in which Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society used it.<sup>522</sup> Venn tended to see the "independence" of the indigenous church as the end product of a process of development.

Keeping in mind the white NGK people's monocultural ethnocentric view of the natural abilities of the blacks to develop, they set themselves, in line with Henry Venn, in the position of "guardian" over the black "mission churches". The Whites will maintain this position for the duration of a long period of "development" until such time as the Blacks had finally attained "full maturity" and

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<sup>521</sup> Gerdener, G.B.A.: Reguit Koers Gehou. Die Wording, Wese en Werking van die N.G.Kerk se sendingbeleid. Kaapstad. 1951: p. 43

<sup>522</sup> Adonis, op. cit., pp.62-63.



thereby reached the point at which they might be considered to be viable as independent churches.

At the same time it can also be said that the NGK was in line with 19th century European Protestant missionary strategy, by arguing that racial separation was regarded as a way to facilitate mission work. They gladly adhered to influential German missiologists such as Gustav Warneck that taught that the gospel should not be proclaimed to mankind in general, but to each nation and group in ways appropriate to their culture.<sup>523</sup>

In 1935 the NGK adopted its first fully articulated missionary policy. It spoke of "Natives and Coloureds" as objects of NGK missionary activity and argued explicitly that there is and can be no social, economic and ecclesiastical equality between blacks and whites.<sup>524</sup> Proceeding from a belief that it has been divinely ordained that natives and coloureds must develop socially and economically in separation from whites, the NGK strongly rejected the integration or mixing of races in any shape or form.

Die N.G. Kerk het dit as sy oortuiging uitgespreek dat die enigste redding vir die voortbestaan van die

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<sup>523</sup>Hoekendijk, J.C.: Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingwetenskap. Amsterdam, 1948, p. 83.

<sup>524</sup>Gerdener, op. cit., p. 91.

Afrikaners gelee is in die implimentering van die beleid van rasse-apartheid.<sup>525</sup>

This NGK mission's policy of separation of races or apartheid, is the very same racial policy which was adopted by the white Afrikaners a few years later at their Volk congresses in 1944 and 1947 as the general, overall official policy of the National Party.

In the report entitled Apartheid en Voogdyskap in die lig van die Heilige Skrif (Apartheid and guardianship in the light of Holy Scripture), E.P. Groenewald referred to the above mentioned Volk's congresses and at the same time tried to supply a biblical foundation for the policy of racial separation<sup>526</sup>. This so-called biblical foundation for racial apartheid was approved, adopted and reconfirmed by the NGK at its synods of 1948 and 1949. Interesting to note that the synod of 1948 accepted this policy just before the election in 1948 during which the National Party came into power under the leadership of former NGK "dominee" D.F. Malan. At the church congress of 1950 the policy of the separation of

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<sup>525</sup> Federale Sendingraad: Sy Ontstaan, Doel en Strewe. Pretoria: Official document of the Federal Missions Board. 1943: p. 74 - 76

<sup>526</sup> Groenewald, E.P.: "Apartheid en Voogdyskap in die Lig van die Heilige Skrif" in Regverdige Rasse-Apartheid. Stellenbosch, 1947, p. 88.

the races was ratified yet again, and a programme for its practical implementation was introduced.<sup>527</sup>

NGK theologians B.B. Keet and the younger B.J. Marais, rejected the "biblical" grounds on which the NGK tried to justify apartheid.<sup>528</sup> This brought them into direct conflict with the representatives of the NGK who were: F.J.M. Potgieter, T.N. Hanekom, E.P. Groenewald and P.S.Z. Coetzee.<sup>529</sup>

The NGK and in particular its theologians continued in their attempts to provide biblical-theological justification for the policy and practice of ecclesiastical apartheid. Prof. du Preez and J.C.G. Kotze<sup>530</sup> are good examples of NGK professors of theology who at this time were devoting many of their writings to the defence of the proposition that the policy of maintaining separate churches for the various

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<sup>527</sup>Adonis, op. cit., pp.92-93.

<sup>528</sup>Keet, B.B.: Korrespondensie: "Die Heilige Skrif en Apartheid" in the Kerkbode, 22 March 1950, pp.576-577.  
: Suid Afrika - waarheen? Stellenbosch: UUB, 1956.  
Marais, B.J.: "Die Skrif en rasseapartheid" in the Gereformeerde Vaandel, 18/1/1950, pp.14-25.

<sup>529</sup>Lombaard, op. cit., p.161.

<sup>530</sup>Du Preez, A.B.: Eiesoortige ontwikkeling tot Volksdiens - die Hoop van Suid Afrika. Kaapstad, 1959.  
Kotze, J.C.G.: Ras, Volk en Nasie in terme van die Skrif. Stellenbosch, 1961.

racial groups in South Africa was solidly founded in Scripture.

This then is part of the background against which the AFM formulated and developed its own missions policy. Thus, two closely related factors influenced the racial policy of the AFM. They were, the NGK's policy of the development of racially segregated churches, and the Government's policy of apartheid and Afrikaner Nationalism. A possible third factor could be the early American Pentecostals who helped to establish Pentecostalism in South Africa, Lake, Hezmalhalch, Lehman, Moody, and Wright. Undoubtedly they had been influenced by racial norms and policies in the USA.

## CHAPTER 4: THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION, THE STATE, AND POLITICS

### The AFM and the State:

The relationship between the early white AFM and the State was clearly one of obedience and reverence most of the time. The only exceptions were when the AFM objected to the State about mandatory vaccination and the use of medicine, and to doing military service during World War One (1914-1918).

A letter in reply from the Defence department, stating that "all applications for exemption from military service will receive immediate consideration",<sup>531</sup> revealed that the AFM held a pacifist stance in 1914 as far as military service was concerned. This anti-war stance was also upheld by Pentecostals in the USA:

When the US entered the war, Pentecostal organizations everywhere voiced the view that their members should seek either conscientious objector or non-combatant status.<sup>532</sup>

The Midnight Cry magazine asserted that Pentecostals could not go to war "and still retain the Spirit of God".<sup>533</sup> In both the USA and South Africa this position changed totally

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<sup>531</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 30/9/1914, p. 165.

<sup>532</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>533</sup> Midnight Cry. New York, August 1915, p.8.

with time, and conscientious objectors to the carrying and using of arms are now a rarity in the AFM.

A respectful attitude towards the government was expected from the AFM in Africa, as is confirmed by the Handbook for the Native Section, in the part dealing with discipline,

11. All our members are instructed to obey the laws of the land, for the Scriptures command, 'submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well' (1Pet. 2:13-14).

12. Any rebellion against higher power is strictly forbidden, 'let every soul be subject unto higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive unto themselves<sup>534</sup> damnation' (Rom. 13:1, 2, 5).

When the AFM strongly opposed the Government about medicine and military service as previously mentioned, the above used scriptures were not quoted.

Submission to state authority was and still is a consistent orientation of the Pentecostal Movement. British Donald Gee said:

It cannot be stated too emphatically that it is the duty of the Christian to be in subjection to the powers that be... Absolute loyalty to the State must be the declared and actual policy of any section of the

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<sup>534</sup>Handbook for the Native Section, op. cit., p.12.

Christian Church that aims at the approval of God.<sup>535</sup>

Because the AFM was initially regarded as a sectarian movement by the mainline churches, the government's attitude toward the AFM was hostile. Thus the AFM had problems in getting sites for black churches, and getting their pastors appointed as marriage officers.<sup>536</sup> This undoubtedly hindered the growth of the AFM in Africa. But with time this situation changed totally. By 1937 it was reported that the AFM's relationship with the government was sound and that they were,

... enjoying all the privileges that other churches enjoyed. The last battle had been to get our pastors appointed marriage officers but today we have no further difficulties.<sup>537</sup>

As the church grew in maturity they had more boldness to enter into discourse with the government over certain issues:

...dat ons vertoe rig aan die regering vir subsidering van die druk en verspreiding van die Afrikaanse Bybel.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> Gee, Donald: "War, the Bible and the Christian" in The Pentecostal Evangel, November 15, 1930, p.2.

<sup>536</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council: 15/3/1913.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid., 27/3/1937.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 30/8/1950, p.20.

During 1953, Dr. Karl Bremer, then Minister of Social Welfare, visited the annual General conference and said:

En daarom is dit vir my so n groot saak dat ek vandag deur my teenwoordigheid hier kan bewys lewer dat die Staat en die Regering die groot werk ten seerste waardeer.<sup>539</sup>

In the Comforter the people were regularly reminded to pray for the Government and those in authorities.<sup>540</sup> In the Comforter of 1952, sympathy was expressed on the death of England's King George the sixth.<sup>541</sup> Because of the good relationship between the Church and the State, the Queen of England in 1953 sent medals to the President of the AFM, Br. G. Vermeulen and the General Secretary Br. A.J. Schoeman as the representatives of the AFM.<sup>542</sup> This was handed over to them by the office of the Prime Minister.

In 1954 representation was made to the Government in order that the AFM could also be allowed to preach over the radio.<sup>543</sup> Regularly a letter was written to the Prime Minister thanking him for his valuable service and assuring him of their prayers.<sup>544</sup> Also mentioned is:

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<sup>539</sup>Ibid., June 1953, p.4.

<sup>540</sup>Ibid., June 1953, p.20.

<sup>541</sup>Comforter, March 1952, p.10.

<sup>542</sup>Ibid., August 1953, p.18.

<sup>543</sup>Ibid., January 1954, p.20

<sup>544</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 3/11/1954.



In Adv. J. G. Strydom, die nuwe Premier van ons land, het ons n ware vriend wat reeds in die verlede dit bewys het. Ons vra u gereelde en opregte voorbidding vir hom en sy kabinet sodat die Here hulle mag seen en met wysheid toebedeel vir die groot taak wat op hulle skouers rus, 1Tim. 2:1-2.<sup>545</sup>

In years to come the AFM would not diverge from this well trod path of submission to the State. When in the early eighties they rejected the policy of apartheid as unbiblical, they were not nearly as adamant about it as was the case in the "medicine issue" mentioned earlier. As a matter of fact they remained very soft-spoken.

In dealing with the relationship between church and state it involuntarily overlaps with the discussion of the role of Christians in politics. This we will try to avoid as we will discuss the role of Christians in politics elsewhere.<sup>546</sup>

Undoubtedly, one aspect of the church's calling in the present political climate in South Africa is that of witnessing. J. M. Vorster believes that the church's witness must be directed inwards, towards the believers, thus equipping them for their political responsibility, but also

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<sup>545</sup>Comforter, January 1955, p.17.

<sup>546</sup>See p.

outwards towards the state.<sup>547</sup> Ben Engelbrecht describes the function this witnessing ought to fulfil towards the state:

Immers, daarop is die kerk se getuienis teenoor die staat gerig: dat die staat in sy geeerbiedigde selfstandigheid as dienaar van God, sy regeertaak sal uitvoer ooreenkomstig die Woord van God.<sup>548</sup>

Whereas the AFM has never formerly formulated its understanding of the role of the church in politics, lately the former President of the AFM wrote

It should make its prophetic word heard concerning theological and ethical principles when it comes to political philosophies and principles. It has a priestly responsibility to fulfil where there is injustice, oppression, suffering etc., and has to endeavour not only to attempt to alleviate the results of social and economic abuse but also to address its causes. It also has to take a kingly stand against all that threatens the kingdom of God on earth and has continually to endeavour to conquer the world for Christ by means of the gospel.<sup>549</sup>

One of the clearest biblical statements in regard to the authority of the government, is found in Paul's declaration in Rom. 13:1-7.<sup>550</sup> Clearly government is

<sup>547</sup> Vorster, J.M.: Die Roeping van die Kerk in die Suid-Afrikaanse Politieke Problematiek. Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, No. 194, Feb. 1984, p. 17.

<sup>548</sup> Engelbrecht, Ben: Ter Wille Van Hierdie Wereld. Kaapstad: Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1982, p. 99.

<sup>549</sup> Moller, F.P.: Church and Politics - a Pentecostal view of the South African situation. Braamfontein: Gospel Publishers, 1988, p. 3-4.

<sup>550</sup> For a contextual exegesis of Rom. 13:1-7 see: Draper, J.A.: "Humble Submission to Almighty God and its Biblical Foundation", in Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, No. 63, June 1988, pp. 30-38.

instituted by God as His servant and as such we are obliged to obey it. But at the same time Rev. 13 makes it clear that man must not absolutize the state. Bennie van der Walt sums it up well, saying,

Romans 13 makes it very clear that we may not regard state (and government) as being lowly. It is not merely a human invention, but an institution ordained by God. Spiritualist disdain as well as revolutionary rejection (which often comes very close to each other indeed - cf. sixteenth century Anabaptism) then does not suit the Christian. Revelations 13, on the other hand, would like to warn mankind that the state should not be too highly regarded - it has a sinful human side.<sup>551</sup>

However, Scripture also makes it clear (I Peter 2:13-14) that the state is not a power next to God but something instituted by Him and to whom it must be subject. This view is supported by 44 university and seminary theologians.

The words of Peter that we should "obey God rather than men" (Acts 4:12) when human laws contradict God's commandments, is fundamental to the Christian confession that Jesus is Lord. Moreover, even Romans 13 the passage most quoted as teaching Christian obedience to political authority, does not exclude opposition to the state when it acts against the common good.<sup>552</sup>

Clearly, the AFM's view is in accordance with the above.

Where there is a conflict, however between your responsibility to the state, God must always be obeyed in the first place. If a person has to suffer because

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<sup>551</sup>Van der Walt, B.J.: Why The State? Potchefstroom: Institute for Reformational Studies, No. 18, 1981, p.29.

<sup>552</sup>Letter to the Press signed by 44 university and seminary theologians in support of the church leaders, 7 April 1988: "Documentation: The Church - State Confrontation", in Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, No. 63, June 1988, p. 81.

of this stand, he should do so with cheerfulness.<sup>553</sup>

Regarding the relationship between church and state, Charles Villa-Vicencio is adamant that there are four options/which neither a responsible church nor legitimate state can accept as justifiable.<sup>554</sup> Firstly, any form of either explicit or implicit theocracy. Secondly, any form of political indifference by the church. Thirdly, morally and theologically unjustifiable, is resignation to a measure of social injustice and political oppression, on the argument that the consequences of a revolution may well be worse than the status quo. Fourthly, theologically unjustifiable, is the affirmation of revolutionary chaos. Villa-Vicencio believes that a viable doctrine of church and state must include three cardinal theological axioms.<sup>555</sup> Firstly, the prophetic function of the church is inherent in its evangelical mission. Secondly, prophetic religion is not in contradiction to a personal, spiritual faith. Thirdly, Christ is the Lord of both theology and politics.

Moller, representing the AFM's view, adds to this, saying

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<sup>553</sup> Moller, 1988. op. cit. pp. 37-38.

<sup>554</sup> Villa-Vicencio, Charles: Resistance and Hope (ed. by Villa-Vicencio & John W. de Gruchy). Cape Town: David Philip, 1985, pp. 121-122.

<sup>555</sup> Villa-Vicencio, 1985, op. cit., pp. 122-124

As the church rebukes the individual for his wrong and sinful life, so the true church will also rebuke any authority doing evil and wrong. The church can show the authorities where they are acting as evil and unworthy servants of God. If it does not do this, it becomes an accomplice to the sins of the authorities.<sup>556</sup>

In the light of this graphic pronouncement, one is highly surprised that the AFM has not yet put this into practice and "rebuked" the state over its persistent apartheid practices, causing untold damages over a wide spectrum to millions of black Christians.<sup>557</sup> It is a fact that the AFM is regarded by many young Blacks as "accomplice to the sins of the authorities", because of their silence in this regard.<sup>558</sup> Surely this must have affected their growth negatively. No wonder that in 1983 an opinion poll taken amongst the pastors of the AFM in Africa revealed, 54% wanted the white AFM to make its prophetic role towards the Government stronger. 53% felt that the leaders of the AFM in Africa should be more outspoken about matters such as racial discrimination, and 64% wanted their leaders to have more direct contact with the Government by means of dialogue.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Moller, 1988, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>557</sup> The AFM renounced Apartheid in 1985, but has been very soft-spoken about it up till now.

<sup>558</sup> Views expressed to me personally by many black AFM pastors. Understandably they do not want their names to be printed.

<sup>559</sup> See Appendix 2.

If a similar poll was taken in 1988, the same feelings would probably be stronger.

For the church to fulfil her role towards the state, Moller believes the following principles should apply:<sup>560</sup>

1. "The Church must always and in all circumstances be free and independent regarding any authority, any political party or any community campaigning for certain political, social or economical matters". Hopefully this does not exclude the joining of forces with other groups or churches to oppose the state in its wrongdoings.

2. "By word and example the church must carry out the principles of the kingdom of God, which are very relevant to man in all his relationships."

3. "The church must at all times identify those things, wherever they may occur, which are contrary to the gospel, but it should also command those things which promote the gospel in non-church circles."

4. "In the event of a revolution, or armed revolt, the church must not become implicated. She must always be in a position where she can minister to people of all conflicting groups". How would this statement be relevant in the present armed struggle between our armed security forces and "revolutionary blacks"? Presently, the AFM is not

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<sup>560</sup>Moller, 1988, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

ministering "people of all conflicting groups". The AFM has only chaplains ministering to the government's troupes. When a pastor of the AFM in Africa, Frank Chikane, tried to minister to the "other" group, he was defrocked for "being involved in politics".<sup>561</sup> If Moller's statement is to be taken at face value, and the AFM wants to minister to "people of all conflicting groups", it will have to appoint chaplains also to the forces opposing the government. If not, the chaplains serving the armed forces of the government must be withdrawn.

5. "The church must within the framework of her divine commission take care of people according to their needs whether they be spiritual, physical, family, social, financial or whatever form they may take. To accomplish this, she must co-operate with all authorities as far as possible."

6. "Where the church is being oppressed by an anti-Christian or godless authority she may never try to get rid of such an authority by outward violent actions."<sup>562</sup>

7. "The church must strive for greater unity within her own ranks so that the various church denominations can speak with one voice and act as one."

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<sup>561</sup> See p.145.

<sup>562</sup> For information about "the Christian and violence", see:  
Vorster W.S. (ed): Views on Violence. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1985.

Wolfram Kirstner suggests that the churches' prophetic role towards the state "is the most loyal service which the church can render to the state, to a particular government and to itself - it is to protect the government from itself and from unreasonable demands made by its people".<sup>563</sup> This prophetic role towards the government is still to be fulfilled more prominently by the AFM.

#### The AFM and Political Involvement:

Early Pentecostals were distinctly hostile to political participation.<sup>564</sup> Although the AFM hardly ever participated actively in Party politics, they supported from the start the reigning Party. If one takes into consideration that the United Party was strongly supported by a considerable portion of South Africans before 1948, and the fact that the AFM was more English orientated than any Afrikaans Church, it is easy to believe that a strong faction of the AFM supported the United Party, even if they did not belong officially to that Party. Burger says:

Volgens Sen. G.R. Wessels was hy die enigste lid van die Uitvoerende Raad wat pro-Nasionale Party was toe hy in 1937 daarop verkies is. Die ander lede het of glad nie gestem nie of het vir die Vereenigde Party gestem.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> As quoted by: Villa-Vicencio, 1985, op.cit., p.119.

<sup>564</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.207.

<sup>565</sup> Burger, op. cit., p.410.



The view of a member of the AFM, Br. Rossouw on the participation of the AFM in the elections of 1953, is a good example of the political feelings amongst members.

Van baie kansels af is kerkgangers openlik aangemoedig om hulle stemme teen Kommunisme uit te bring, waarmee te kenne gegee is dat die Nasionale Party gesteun moes word. Dieselfde raad is ook deur Pinksterleiers en pastore gegee. Pinkstermanne en vroue het selfs aktief aan die organisasie deelgeneem.<sup>566</sup>

Reacting to Rossouw's allegations, Vice-President Wessels (who in 1955 became National Party Senator) said:

Dit was nog altyd die beleid van die AGS in die verlede om hom as beweging nie met party-politiek in te meng nie. Dit beteken nou nie dat ons afsydig of onverskillig teenoor staatkundige aangeleenthede moet staan nie.

He continued making statements like, "Wat die uitbring van n stem in 'n algemene verkiesing betref, kan ons absoluut geen gevaar of nadeel in sien nie..."<sup>567</sup>

Wessels' later involvement in politics was a cause of great concern to many members of the AFM. This letter and the discussion that followed illustrates it,

Besluit op voorstel van Br. Smith dat ons die brief van die Oos Rand Distrikraad insake Voltydwerkers en Politieke bedrywighede onmiddellik bespreek. Almal ten gunste.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Trooster, July 1953, p.20.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>568</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 16/8/1955.

The next motion was moved by the much more enlightened J.T.

Du Plessis :

...dat die Uitvoerende Raad ten opsigte van politieke en maatskaplike aangeleenthede aan die voltydse werkers van die AGS volkome vryheid van gewete toelaat in die gees en gesindheid van Rom.14.

An amendment followed on this:

Voorgestel deur broer Smit en gesekondeer deur broer Hanekom dat die Uitvoerende Raad hom openlik uitspreek teen die aktiewe deelname deur ons voltydse werkers aan die politiek, wat ons in die verlede beskou het as 'n ongeskrewe reël.

The next amendment was accepted after a discussion of three and a half hours. It was decided that the whole matter be referred to the Spiritual Committee to give pronouncement.

What the outcome of the Spiritual Committee's finding was is not mentioned, but at the Workers Council meeting of 1956 it was decided:

...Dat geen voltydse werker hom aktief mag bemoei met party-politieke aangeleenthede nie, en ook op geen politieke liggaam dien nie, behalwe in gevalle waar die Geestelike Komitee van mening is dat dit in belang van die Koninkryk van God en van die Kerk van Christus is. Dat die Uitvoerende Raad ook die status van enige sodanige voltydswerker sal bepaal. <sup>569</sup>

Apparently Wessels was allowed for the "sake of the Church" to serve as National Party Senator and remain an ordained pastor of the AFM. Probably the Executive Council believed that Wessels' appointment in government, would be

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<sup>569</sup> Minutes of the annual General Workers Council, 2-5 April 1956.

specifically beneficial to the AFM, especially in gaining official "church status".

It is also a well-documented fact that this was regarded as one of the key issues during the "church split" that occurred in 1958 in the white AFM, out of which the Pentecostal Protestant Church was born.<sup>570</sup>

That the AFM was inconsistent in their dealing with white and black pastors involved in politics is crystal clear. The white pastor, Wessels, was actively involved in party-politics and even served for many years as a National Party Senator, while he remained unhindered in the ministry. In 1981, the black pastor, Frank Chikane, was accused of "being involved in politics", and suspended from ministry even though he never had been directly involved in political organisations between 1974 and 1983.<sup>571</sup> What makes this even more remarkable is the fact that Wessels was active in a political party that caused millions of blacks, including black AFM members, unmentionable pain and suffering, yet it was Chikane who, without any active political participation, dared to voice his objection against the racial oppressive

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<sup>570</sup>For a historical background on this church-split see:  
Burger, op. cit., pp.395 - 447.

<sup>571</sup>For a biography of Frank Chikane see p.143

system imposed by Wessels' party who got suspended. Probably another big difference is that Wessels never got detained for his political views, whereas Chikane was three times detained by the police, which of course branded him a "criminal" and "terrorist" in the eyes of most whites. The fact that he had not been found guilty by any court of justice of any offense whatsoever, did not change this.

This apolitical feeling of the majority of South African Pentecostals was normative in the white AFM for many years. This did not, however, prohibit the Executive Council from voicing specific political views and making pronouncements. A good example of this was when the AFM decided in accordance with the National Party that, "...geen lidmaat mag onder die naam van die AGS saamwerk met "Die Christelike Instituut van SA nie".<sup>572</sup> Unfortunately no motivation for this drastic decision is documented. The Christian Institute was started on the 15th of August 1963 with former NGK moderator Dr. Beyers Naude its Director. Its aim was to "...serve the Church of Christ in every possible way". On October 19th, 1977 the Government declared the Christian Institute illegal.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 16/8/1963, p.7.

<sup>573</sup> Villa-Vicencio, Charles and De Gruchy, John (Editors): Resistance and Hope. Cape Town: David Philip, 1985, pp.14-26.

The doctrine of political abstinence was well taught by the white missionaries to the blacks. The effect thereof can clearly be seen in the opinion poll mentioned earlier, taken amongst black pastors of the AFM. So strong is their antipathy against anything political in nature, that only 56 out of the 174 pastors present were willing to complete the section dealing with "The believer and politics".<sup>574</sup>

1) Of those that completed this section, 60% felt that active participation in local, regional or party politics is sinful.

2) Only one person felt that it was permissible for a believer to be a candidate for a political party.

3) Only 23% of the participants believed it is right to vote in any election.

Because the black church has matured somewhat politically during the last five years, a similar poll taken today would probably yield a different picture. The anti-political inclination would certainly not be so strong.

Without giving reasons, Hollenweger argues that Pentecostals took over their attitude of political abstinence from the Holiness Movement.<sup>575</sup> That the

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<sup>574</sup>This can be understood if one takes into consideration the way in which Frank Chikane was dealt with because of his "political activity".

<sup>575</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., pp.467-468.

Pentecostals view of politics corresponds with the apolitical view of the Holiness movement might be true, but whether the Pentecostals took over its attitude from the Holiness movement must still be proved. Anderson in his study of Pentecostals writes,

Voting was only infrequently prohibited, but also only infrequently encouraged and then not as far as I can determine, before the 1930's. It was sometimes denigrated mostly neglected, but usually tolerated. All political involvement beyond voting however was severely condemned because, as Frank Bartleman subtly remarked, 'politics is rotten'.<sup>576</sup>

A former chairman of the Assemblies of God in the USA, remarked: "I do not mix in party politics".<sup>577</sup> Members of the Pentecostal Holiness Church were strictly forbidden to engage in "corrupt partisan politics".<sup>578</sup>

In the light of the above Hollenweger surprisingly mentions that individual Pentecostals have become politically conscious,

In Brazil before the military regime was set up, Pentecostals were federal and provincial deputies, and in Canada and Kenya there were pentecostal ministers in the government."<sup>579</sup>

Henry Lederle adds to this, saying,

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<sup>576</sup> Anderson, op. cit., pp.207-208.

<sup>577</sup> Pentecostal Evangel. 14 October 1922, p.4.

<sup>578</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.208.

<sup>579</sup> Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.469.

It is interesting to note in passing that 'classical Pentecostals' (whose views have been more thoroughly researched) vary from 'politically disinterested' in Chile and 'very weak socio-political engagement' amongst Indian Pentecostals in South Africa to 'increased engagement in society by the Central American Pentecostals' and the situation in Sweden where a new political party, the Christian Democratic Party, was formed in 1964 - the first in the world with Pentecostals as the core group, the elderly Pentecostal churchman, Lewi Pethrus, becoming vice-chairman of the party. He had argued since 1944: 'It was biblical... not to dissociate from the development of society and the decision-making process, but it was a Christian duty to engage oneself actively in it. It was real Christianity not only to pray and praise God but also to work in the direction of the prayer'. This high degree of societal involvement (the forming of a political party) was preceded and facilitated by a Pentecostal newspaper, 'Dagen', which had started way back in 1945, almost twenty years before the founding of the Christian Democratic Party.<sup>580</sup>

The political awakening of the large black Pentecostal Movement in the USA, representing between 1,5 and 5 million members is of great significance.

This group is posing at the present day a whole series of questions about the political relevance of the Gospel. These churches regard political involvement and picketing as gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>581</sup>

In his study on Black Pentecostalism Hollenweger writes:

In addition to the charisms which are known in the history of Pentecostalism, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, religious dancing, prayer for the sick, they practise the gift of demonstrating, of organizing and publicizing as another kind of prophecy.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Lederle, H.I.: "The charismatic movement - the ambiguous challenge" in Missionalia, Pretoria, Vol.14, No.2, August 1986, p.67.

<sup>581</sup> Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.469.

<sup>582</sup> Hollenweger, 1974, op. cit., p.15.

Black pentecostals are not satisfied with the feeble attempts of white Pentecostals in North America to understand social and political commitment as a task of the individual Christian (and not of the churches), and the very tardy and generalized appeals for the Christian's love of one's neighbour to be extended to the social field.

We believe in the content of the Graham message, but we can't go along with its suburban middle-class white orientation, that<sup>583</sup> has nothing to say to the poor nor to the Black people.

The above mentioned views of black Pentecostals in North America do not represent the feelings of the majority of Pentecostals. While there is a political awakening amongst some, the majority are still very softspoken about their politics. There are certain factors contributing to this apolitical stance. Anderson gives the key to the first:

The degree to which the revolutionary potential of a millenarian movement is realized depends upon how it views the coming Millennium. If the movement sees itself as the divine agent for building the Millennium within the present, then reform or revolution will be the likely result. If it sees the Millennium brought in miraculously from the outside without human effort, then withdrawal and accomodation will more likely be the consequence.<sup>584</sup>

The majority of Pentecostals like the AFM fall in this latter category, believing that "After the return of Christ He shall reign gloriously over the earth with His Saints for

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<sup>583</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>584</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.195.



a thousand years. Rev. 20:1-6; Rev. 2:26-27".<sup>585</sup> The second major factor coincides with the first. An important motivational element in the Pentecostal theology has been an intense premillennial eschatology. Premillennialism and the belief in the imminency of Christ's return forged the evangelistic fervor of the Movement right from its infancy.<sup>586</sup>

They were captivated by an eschatological urgency and filled with the assurance that God had divinely ordained them for 'last days ministry'.<sup>587</sup>

Because Christ's return was so near they dared not "waste" time for politics or other social activities. All their time and energy had to be used "saving souls". Stanley H. Frodsham cited a 1941 conference report from China, summing up their messages as follows:

The time is short; the coming of our Lord is near; the present opportunities of evangelism will not last long; the Lord longs to work in a new, glorious and mighty way to show forth His glory and save souls...<sup>588</sup>

Thirdly, Pentecostals believe the World to be sinful.

Scriptures usually quoted are James 4:4-5; Romans 12:2. Pentecostal leader C.T. Taylor provides a good example of this view:

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<sup>585</sup> Handbook for the Native Section, p.7.

<sup>586</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op.cit., pp.154-156.

<sup>587</sup> McClung, L. Grant. op. cit., p.137.

<sup>588</sup> Frodsham, Stanley H.: With Signs Following.  
Springfield, Miss.: Gospel Pub. House, 1946, pp.275-276.

The spirit of antiChrist pervades the world today. There is not a government on earth that is not controlled by this spirit. It is useless to say that the Christian people should rise up by ballot and put such a spirit out. Such a thing is impossible. All efforts to put it down are fruitless. The only thing we can do<sup>589</sup> is to seek to save individuals from its power.

Fourthly, total submission and obedience to the ruling Government and its laws were a scriptural norm expected from them on the biblical grounds of Romans 13:1-2,5 and 1Peter 2:13-14.<sup>590</sup> Of course, one could argue that this is in fact not apolitical but rather conforming to the ruling political party. It goes without saying that it is much easier for white Pentecostals to be apolitical when the policy of the government favours them socio-economically without any discrimination. At the same time one can understand why black Pentecostals in the USA and, increasingly so in South Africa, are more politically active. Keeping in mind that in South Africa Blacks have no other platform but the Church to voice their objections and political views, one is surprised that black Pentecostalism in South Africa has remained silent and politically inactive for so long.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Taylor, G.F.: In the Pentecostal Holiness Advocate, 28th June, 1917, p.8.

<sup>590</sup> Handbook for the Native Section, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>591</sup> Because some would disagree that the African Zionist Indigeneous Churches can be classified as Pentecostal, they are not included in this statement.

## CHAPTER 5: PENTECOSTALISM AND THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

A definite relationship exists between Pentecostalism and the Church Growth Movement. But, before we amplify that, let us look at a brief historical overview of the Church Growth Movement.

Donald McGavran is widely regarded as the father of the Church Growth Movement. While he was a missionary of the United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of Christ) in India, he began to use the term "Church Growth" because he disagreed with the way more liberal churchmen were interpreting the older and more familiar terms of "missions" and "evangelism". The historical event now regarded as the beginning of the Movement, was McGavran's publishing of The Bridges of God in 1955.

McGavran started Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission and the Institute of Church Growth in 1965. In 1970 McGavran wrote what Peter Wagner calls the Magna Carta of the Church Growth Movement, Understanding Church Growth, published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> McGavran, Donald A.: Understanding Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, p.14. (Fully revised in 1980)

Peter Wagner, the successor of Donald McGavran as professor in Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, defines Church Growth as,

all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership.<sup>593</sup>

Wilbert R. Schenk acknowledges the several contributions the Church Growth School has made to the field of missiology, as the following:

In the first place, it has offered a new way of understanding the missionary task and encouraged the rereading of the history of Christian missions to highlight the 'growth' theme. Second, Church Growth has readily appropriated the tools of cognate disciplines - particularly the social sciences and statistics - in doing its work. A third contribution has been the insistence on ruthless honesty in understanding and evaluating the record in a given country or region. Church Growth has given short shrift to easy rationalizations or woolly reasoning used in defense of time-honored but unproductive methods. Fourth, Church Growth has pioneered a new theoretical construct for the study of church growth worldwide.<sup>594</sup>

But what has been the relationship between the Pentecostal Movement and the Church Growth Movement until now? Pentecostal scholar Grant McClung states that

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<sup>593</sup> Wagner, C. Peter: Your Church can Grow. Glendale, California: Eerdmans, 1976, p.120

<sup>594</sup> Schenk, Wilbert R: Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, p vii.

pre-McGavran voices were already calling attention to the Church Growth practices of Pentecostals in the 1940's and early 1950's.<sup>595</sup> Thus right at the start of the Church Growth Movement, Donald McGavran determined that one of his primary goals would be to find out, "what makes pentecostal churches grow?" This question has "...animated my mind since the early sixties.." McGavran said.<sup>596</sup> By 1977 he devoted the entire issue of the Church Growth Bulletin to Pentecostal growth. He examined five growth factors: utter yieldedness to the Holy Spirit; God the Holy Spirit acting powerfully through ordinary Christians; the use of connections - bridges - between newly saved pentecostals and their unreached friends in the world; the belief in and ability to deal with demons and evil spirits; and the use of innovative and adventurous patterns of church growth.<sup>597</sup>

Soon McGavran was joined by Church Growth proponents who made discerning observations about Pentecostal growth. Men like William R. Read, later joined by Victor M. Monterroso and Harmon A. Johnson, produced what McGavran

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<sup>595</sup> McClung, L. Grant JR.: Azusa Street and Beyond. South Plainfield: Bridge Pub., 1986, p.110.

<sup>596</sup> McGavran, Donald A.: Church Growth Bulletin, Santa Clara, CA 1982, p.97.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid., pp.98-99.

called a "monumental study".<sup>598</sup> In his study about Latin American Pentecostalism Peter Wagner contributed much to inform the evangelical world about Pentecostal's growth dynamics.<sup>599</sup> Wagner said:

Through the years I have become very close to Pentecostals. Why? Primarily because I am a student of church growth: and, no matter where I look around the globe, I find that Pentecostal churches are leading the way in rates of increase.<sup>600</sup>

Pentecostals have responded by interacting with the Church Growth Movement and emphasizing particular areas that they feel are indispensable reasons for their own growth. One of the basic concerns of the Pentecostals is that they fear that the Church Growth Movement may tend to overemphasize the socio-anthropological explanations for the growth of Pentecostalism, and underemphasize the role of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, Church Growth thinking is finding its way more and more into Pentecostal circles. We agree with McClung when he states:

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<sup>598</sup>Read, William R., Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson: Latin America Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969.

<sup>599</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: Look Out! The Pentecostals are Coming. London: Coverdale House, 1974. NOW: Spiritual Power and Church Growth. Altamonte Springs: Strang, 1986.

<sup>600</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: "Characteristics of Pentecostal Church Growth," in The Pentecostal Minister, Cleveland: Church of God. 1982, Vol. 2, No. 2, p.4.

...neither the Church Growth Movement nor the Pentecostal Movement would say that they have been the cause for each other's acceptance and diffusion. The Pentecostal Movement has, in a sense, benefited from the Church Growth Movement's recognition. On the other hand, the Pentecostal Movement has encouraged the Church Growth Movement and has been admired as a model by its researchers.<sup>601</sup>

Pentecostal Paul Pomerville, who is also a product of the "Church-Growth school of thought", believes that there are certain similarities in the criticism of both Pentecostals and Church Growth. For while they both are committed to a biblically-oriented strategy of mission, they are both charged with faulty hermeneutics, and a pragmatic approach to strategy. For both the world does not set the theological agenda, but rather the authoritative starting point is clearly Scripture.<sup>602</sup>

To effectively evaluate the contribution of the Church Growth Movement to missiology, let us look at its biblical, theological, anthropological and attitudinal presuppositions.

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<sup>601</sup>McClung, op. cit., p.115.

<sup>602</sup>Pomerville, Paul A.: The Third Force in Missions. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1985, p.109.

## Presuppositions of the Church Growth Movement

### Biblical Presuppositions:

First of all, Church Growth presupposes that a "biblical theological position is the bedrock of church growth".<sup>603</sup> Secondly, the typical church growth advocate is thoroughly committed to the doctrines of the inspiration and authority of Scripture<sup>604</sup>. Thirdly, plain biblical statements should be taken at their face value.<sup>605</sup>

### Theological Presuppositions:

When one looks closely at Church Growth literature, one finds that all of the traditional doctrines presupposed by conservative evangelical Christians appear to be there. Those about the deity of Christ, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, belief in the lostness of humanity apart from faith in Jesus Christ, belief in heaven and hell, etc. According to Miles<sup>606</sup>, this is indeed their first theological presupposition: "We have adequate theology which we have received from the past." "We do not really need any

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<sup>603</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: "More than a man" in Christianity Today. No.xviii, 1973, p 12.

<sup>604</sup>Ibid

<sup>605</sup>Glasser, Arthur F. "Church Growth and Theology" in God, Man and Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973, p.53.

<sup>606</sup>Miles, Delos: Church Growth - A Mighty River. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1981, p.73



more theological clarification. What we need now is efficiency." <sup>607</sup>

A second theological presupposition which has been hammered out by Church Growth proponents, is that God is interested in results. "The church that does not grow," says Glasser, <sup>608</sup> "is out of the will of God". They make it clear, however, that evangelistic and missionary effectiveness have to be measured by disciples, not mere decisions.

A third theological presupposition is that conversion is not necessarily an individual decision. Church Growth prefers to call it multi-individual, mutually interdependent decisions. Over two billion of the three billion still to be reached for Christ, live in people groups within which there are hardly any Christians. Such persons are to be reached through people-movements like the residents of Lydda and Sharon in Acts 9:35.

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<sup>607</sup>Yoder, John H. "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspectives" in The Challenge of Church Growth. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973, p.27.

<sup>608</sup>Glasser, op. cit., p.52.

The fourth presupposition is that discipling and perfecting<sup>609</sup> can be separated, although they are closely related. More recently McGavran has sought to clarify his thoughts on discipling and perfecting by identifying three meanings of the verb disciple.

A fifth theological presupposition is that Christian growth may be based on a biological-educational model of conversion. Robert L. Ramseyer sums up the theological implications of this biological-educational model:

The new Christian must be led gradually from his first commitment to Christ to a state of maturity in which he will come to understand more fully the implication of that commitment for his way of life. This growth model applies both to individual Christians and to churches. On this basis church growth theory is able to separate church planting and Christian living, discipling and perfecting, mission and applied Christianity.<sup>610</sup>

A sixth presupposition is that priority is given to evangelism over all other activities and functions of the Church. Although the cultural mandate is God's command and must be taken seriously, the biblical indication is that the

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<sup>609</sup> McGavran defines perfecting as: "bringing about an ethical change in the disciplined group, an increasing achievement of a thoroughly Christian way of life for the community as a whole", living which includes "social, racial and political justice"  
McGavran, Donald A.: The Bridges of God. New York: Friendship Press, 1955, p.15.

<sup>610</sup> Ramseyer, Robert L. "Anthropological Perspectives on Church Growth Theory" in The Challenge of Church Growth. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973, p 69.

evangelical mandate must take priority.

I repeat that fulfilling the cultural mandate is not optional for Christians. It's God's command and part of Christian mission. But it is true that, when a choice must be made on the basis of availability of resources or of value judgments, the biblical indication is that the evangelistic mandate must take priority. Nothing is or can be as important as saving souls from eternal damnation.<sup>611</sup>

The seventh and last of these presuppositions has to do with obedience. Church Growth leaders insist on obedience to the Word and will of God.

#### **Anthropological Presuppositions:**

The first of these presuppositions is that the clash between Christianity and the many human cultures, "is confined to one or two percent of the components". What McGavran means is that each culture consists of many levels and aspects, which he calls components. Only a few of these components clash with Christianity. McGavran believes that, "there is no clash with 95% of the components". What clash there is has to do with the gods, fetishes, charms, in short, "the paraphernalia of idolatry and spirit worship" and with such practices as head-hunting.<sup>612</sup> Practically McGavran is saying that "Christianity is wholly neutral to

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<sup>611</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.101.

<sup>612</sup>McGavran, Donald A.: The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures. Washington D.C.: Canon Press, 1974, pp.41-42.

the vast majority of cultural components". He identifies his point of view as having much similarity with H. Richard Niebuhr's, "Christ The Transformer of Culture" model.<sup>613</sup>

A second presupposition is that receptivity to the Christian faith is to a large extent dependent upon social and cultural factors. McGavran comments that "contrary to the presuppositions of many, some causes of growth are non-theological".<sup>614</sup> He contends, "Church Growth often depends on harvesting fields when they are ripe".<sup>615</sup> Bishop Waskom Pickett's pioneering research recorded in Christian Mass Movements in India, revealed that many Indians came to Christ for social reasons.<sup>616</sup>

A third presupposition has to do with the rate of change as this relates to receptivity to the Gospel. It is presupposed that those populations undergoing change will be more receptive to the Christian faith. More will be said later on about this.

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<sup>613</sup> Ibid., p 39.

<sup>614</sup> McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.161.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., p.154.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., pp.150-152.

A fourth presupposition which follows directly on the above claim, is that the most important subunit in cultures is the homogeneous unit, because "the gospel flows the best over living bridges, the channels of family and friendship".<sup>617</sup>

A fifth presupposition is that the social sciences should be used in researching church growth. Anthropology, sociology, psychology, communications theory, statistical analysis and so forth, all have a role to play in Church Growth.

The sixth presupposition is that the use of a medical model provides helpful insight in conveying the substance and intention of Church Growth. Thus a "healthy" church grows. One may have "church growth eyes", discern the "body", etc. There is a "disease of slow growth". Wagner names eight so-called "diseases", one of which is fatal namely, "ethnikitis".<sup>618</sup> According to Wagner,

ethnikitis is caused by a failure on the part of the church leadership to understand and apply the homogeneous unit principle to their planning in time.<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> McGavran Donald. "Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow" in Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976, p 262.

<sup>618</sup> Wagner, C. Peter. Your Church can be Healthy. Nashville : Abington Press, 1979.

<sup>619</sup> Wagner, 1976, op. cit., p.125.

A seventh presupposition is that church growth requires detailed and long range planning. Church growth theorists are not opposed to applying Management by Objectives (MBO) in their work.

#### **Attitudinal Presuppositions:**

Delos Miles declares, "Church Growth is an attitude, a mood, a mind set."<sup>620</sup> Church Growth advocates presuppose a pragmatic attitude towards methods, a positive attitude towards results and an optimistic attitude towards the future. Pragmatism, positivism and optimism characterize both its theoreticians and its practitioners.

Church Growth is fiercely pragmatic, though its advocates would certainly not dare to compromise the ethical demands of the gospel.<sup>621</sup> It is pragmatic in that it is sceptical of claims which cannot be substantiated with facts. It takes no method at face value. It does not waste much time thinking about what should bring persons to Christ. Rather it is more concerned with what does bring people to Christ.<sup>622</sup> The questions they are forever asking are: "Will it work?" and "What is

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<sup>620</sup>Miles, op. cit., p.80.

<sup>621</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.72.

<sup>622</sup>Wagner, 1976, op. cit., p.140.

working?"

Church Growth simply takes the dreams and aspiration and methods of good missionaries and effective evangelists and throws a spotlight on them and says, 'Look, this is working.'<sup>623</sup>

In line with their pragmatic attitude, Church Growth proponents believe that churches should concentrate on the responsive segments of society. Win the winnable while they are winnable, is church growth advice. Do not neglect or reject resistant people, but concentrate available resources on receptive people. "Gospel acceptors should always have a higher priority than Gospel rejectors."<sup>624</sup>

As a concomitant to pragmatism and positivism, Church Growth thinkers also presuppose an optimistic attitude towards the future. McGavran's unforgettable expression of this irrepressible optimism is that we are in the "sunrise, not the sunset of mission"<sup>625</sup>. If the nineteenth century was "the great century" in church growth, the twentieth century is destined to be even greater.

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<sup>623</sup> McClung, op. cit., p.116.

<sup>624</sup> McGavran, Donald A.: In the Church Growth Bulletin. Pasadena, Vol. 1-5, p.25.

<sup>625</sup> Tippet, Allan R.: God, Man and Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973, p.143

Not only has the Movement acquired a broad spectrum of followers, but also a good auditorium of critics.

The critics, some quite outspoken, have been extremely helpful in directing the attention of church growth advocates to areas where a closer look at certain theological and social issues needs to be taken. Critical issues that are raised are: is it right to count?<sup>626</sup>; the discipling - perfecting issue<sup>627</sup>; the homogeneous unit principle<sup>628</sup>; the priority of the evangelistic over the cultural mandate<sup>629</sup>; the resistance - receptivity theory<sup>630</sup>; people movements<sup>631</sup>; and some less significant issues. Because most of these criticisms against the Church Growth Movement are also to a certain extent relevant to the AFM in

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<sup>626</sup>See p. 231

<sup>627</sup>For literature on this debate, see:  
 McGavran, Donald A.: Understanding Church Growth (revised). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, p.170.  
 Conn, Harvie M.: "Looking for a Method" in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, p.80.  
 Costas, Orlando E.: The Church and its Mission. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Pub., 1974, p.133.  
 Bosch, David J.: "The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20", in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, pp.218-248.  
 Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.133.

<sup>628</sup>See p. 257

<sup>629</sup>See p. 291

<sup>630</sup>See p. 373

<sup>631</sup>See p. 373



Africa, they are integrated into the discussion which will follow later.

Whereas we have now looked at the relationship of Pentecostalism to the Church Growth Movement, and the presuppositions of Church Growth, we will do in the next chapter a statistical excursus of the AFM in Africa.

CHAPTER 6: A STATISTICAL EXCURSUS OF THE AFM IN AFRICA: 1908  
- 1980.

Donald McGavran has rendered a great service to the missionary enterprise by "his insistence on the need to gather objective and accurate data in order to disperse the fog in which it has operated for so long".<sup>632</sup> McGavran argues,

The numerical approach is essential to understanding church growth. The Church is made up of countable people and there is nothing particularly spiritual in not counting them. Men use the numerical approach in all worthwhile human endeavor.<sup>633</sup>

The Church Growth Movement has received some harsh criticism for their use of numbers in their methodology. Rene Padilla feels that the "excessive emphasis on numbers" in Church Growth becomes mere "numerology". He objects to the "philosophy of statistical success".<sup>634</sup> Wes Michaelson speaks of "the idolization of church growth"<sup>635</sup>, and Andrew

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<sup>632</sup>Gibbs, Eddie: I Believe in Church Growth, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1981, p.131.

<sup>633</sup>McGavran, Donald. Understanding Church Growth. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970, p.83.

<sup>634</sup>Padilla, Rene C.: "A Steep Climb ahead for Theology in Latin America", in Evangelical Missions Quarterly, No.2, pp.102,104.

<sup>635</sup>Michaelson, Wes: "Evangelicalism and Radical Discipleship" in Evangelicalism and Anabaptism. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1979, p. 79.

Kirk warns against "the current evangelistic triumphalism of a concern for numbers."<sup>636</sup>

Yoder feels that the above mentioned critics "are not fair to the intention and the creative contribution of Church Growth."<sup>637</sup>

To this criticism, Wagner readily admits, "This negative image may well have been fueled by Church Growth leaders themselves who have not in the past given enough emphasis to the cultural mandate alongside the evangelistic mandate."<sup>638</sup> Eddie Gibbs believes that church growth thinking in its early days tended to over-emphasise numbers in an effort to provide a necessary corrective to the widespread avoidance of the issue.<sup>639</sup> Wagner states the future position of the Church Growth Movement on numbers clearly when he says, "The Church Growth Movement is not about to forgo the use of numbers and statistics".<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>636</sup>Kirk, J. Andrew: "The Kingdom of God and The Church in Contemporary Protestantism and Catholicism" in Let the Earth Hear His Voice. Minneapolis: World Wide Publishers, 1975, p. 1080.

<sup>637</sup>Yoder, 1973, op. cit., p.29-30.

<sup>638</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.61.

<sup>639</sup>Gibbs, op. cit., p.136.

<sup>640</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.62.

Although Church Growth people will gladly accept the admonition that the goal of added numbers must not be absolutized, Wagner states,

Throughout the last couple of decades, church growth studies based on as careful and objective quantitative reporting as possible, have greatly accelerated the fulfillment of the evangelistic mandate from the human point of view, and I believe, brought glory to God.<sup>641</sup>

Lyle E. Schaller, a church consultant, says that "the most widespread defensive response to the Church Growth Movement by the congregations on a plateau or declining in size is, 'We're not interested in the numbers game. We're concentrating on quality'".<sup>642</sup> Missionary statesman Max Warren also argues that what matters is quality, not quantity.<sup>643</sup> While Warren is right to caution against an obsessive preoccupation with numbers, he overstates his case when he is so totally dismissive of all quantity measurements. The Church Growth Movement feels that it is not legitimate to set quantity up as opposed to quality in church growth. No Church Growth advocate would deny the need for high quality churches. Wagner states clearly, "I share the concern of those who strive to avoid 'a new version of

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<sup>641</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.62.

<sup>642</sup>Schaller, Lyle E.: "Overlooked Characteristics of Growing Congregations" in Church Administration Magazine. Pub. unknown, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>643</sup>Warren, Max: I Believe in the Great Commission. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, p. 155.

the old Constantinism' or churches that are little more than a 'mass of baptized unbelievers'".<sup>644</sup> The importance that the Church Growth Movement attaches to the making of true disciples and not having mere decisions in evangelism underlines their seriousness about quality in the church.

Lesslie Newbigin observes that although attention was given to numerical growth in the first chapters of Acts, the rest of the New Testament furnishes little evidence of interest in numerical growth.<sup>645</sup> Gibbs agrees with him that the New Testament displays no great preoccupation with data gathering, but attributes it to the following reasons. Firstly, one must consider the complexity of numeration in both the Hebrew and Roman world.<sup>646</sup> Secondly, the New Testament churches were just beginning and unlike the majority of today's churches, for the most part consisted of small groups of people meeting in homes.<sup>647</sup>

Although one realizes the positive use of statistics to determine general trends of growth or decline, to evaluate their significance, and to draw up long-term plans, the

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<sup>644</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.64.

<sup>645</sup>Newbigin, Lesslie: The Open Secret. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, p. 139.

<sup>646</sup>Gibbs, op. cit., p.134.

<sup>647</sup>Ibid, p. 137.

following cannot be ignored. As is confirmed by the Lausanne Covenant, one can "become unduly preoccupied with statistics or even dishonest in our use of them".<sup>648</sup> Added numbers are not only valid measurement of church growth. Missions Professor John Young believes that,

The response of churches to the total covenant task of the evangelistic, ecclesiastical, and educational stipulations of Christ is a far more complete biblical criterion for evaluation of church growth.<sup>649</sup>

The strength of a church is not just in its numbers. Also, "sometimes there must be less before there can be more".<sup>650</sup> Sometimes a church must lose people before it can start growing. Lastly, statistics ought never to become an end in themselves. Alan Tippet categorically states that

This would disqualify them by definition. If the motivation for numbering is self-glorification or denominational glorification, it stands biblically condemned, as the precedent of David illustrates.

Nevertheless, it is imperative for every Church or religious organization to look objectively at its progress, or lack of progress, and at its methods. The facts of

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<sup>648</sup>International Review of Mission: "The Lausanne Covenant". No 252, Oct. 1974, Art. 12.

<sup>649</sup>Young, John M. L.: "The Place and Importance of Numerical Church Growth" in Theological Perspectives on Church Growth. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1976, p. 72.

<sup>650</sup>Zunkel, C. Wayne: Church Growth Under Fire. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1987, p. 121.

growth, stagnation, or decline must be seriously sought and honestly faced. This statistical report of the AFM in Africa will serve this purpose.

Geographically the scope of this study comprises the Republic of South Africa (RSA), including all the black "Homelands", as well as South West Africa/Namibia, unless otherwise stated. The main sources of the data used are the authoritative statistical work done by Dr. Dons Kritzinger of the Institute for Missiological Research (ISWEN) at Pretoria University,<sup>651</sup> and the annual mission reports of the AFM.<sup>652</sup>

Kritzinger made exclusive use of the Government census statistics of 1980 in his study.<sup>653</sup> These prove very helpful in obtaining a broad general religious overview of South Africa, but are not accurate enough to be used for a denomination such as the AFM. Kritzinger himself says that the data gained from the census is of relative value only.<sup>654</sup> The reasons for this are:

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<sup>651</sup>Kritzinger, J.J.: Statistiese Beskrywing van die Godsdienstige Verspreiding van die Bevolking van Suid Afrika. Pretoria: ISWEN, 1985.

<sup>652</sup>Werkersraadverslae (Workers Council reports): 1970-1980. Available in the AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>653</sup>Kritzinger, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>654</sup>Kritzinger, op. cit., p. 6

1. The governmental census represents only a 5% random sample. This results in unreliable statistics.

2. Some people regard themselves as belonging to a church group although they have never accepted official membership.

3. Children are usually for census purposes regarded as being of the same church as parents, as the census is taken per family unit. This is not in fact necessarily the case.

4. Great confusion exists in South Africa especially among Blacks concerning the great number of churches that have "Apostolic" or "Zion" as part of their name.

5. Nominal or inactive members of a church are sometimes not familiar with the official name of the church and can be confused in their response.

All of the above potential mistakes can influence the statistics greatly.

Before we evaluate the statistics of the AFM, let us briefly look at a religious overview of South Africa in 1980.<sup>655</sup> South West Africa is not included in this overview.

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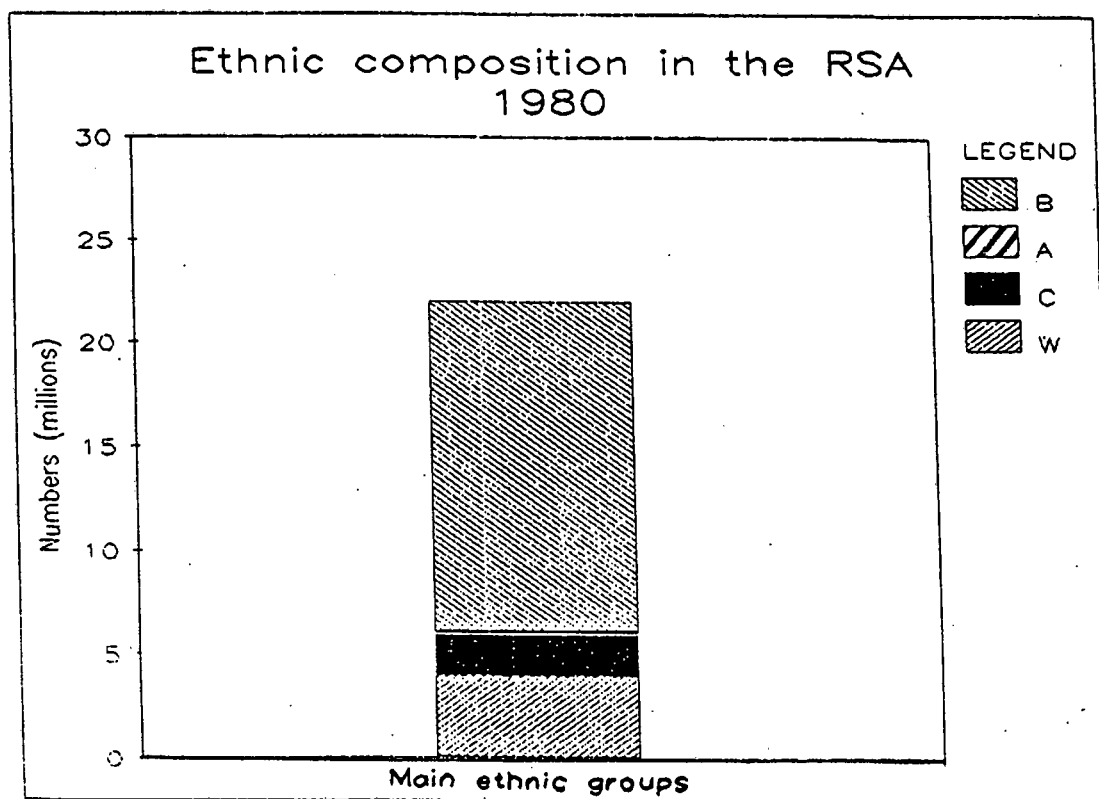
<sup>655</sup>Kritzing. op. cit. p.23.



### A. Religious overview of the RSA: 1980.

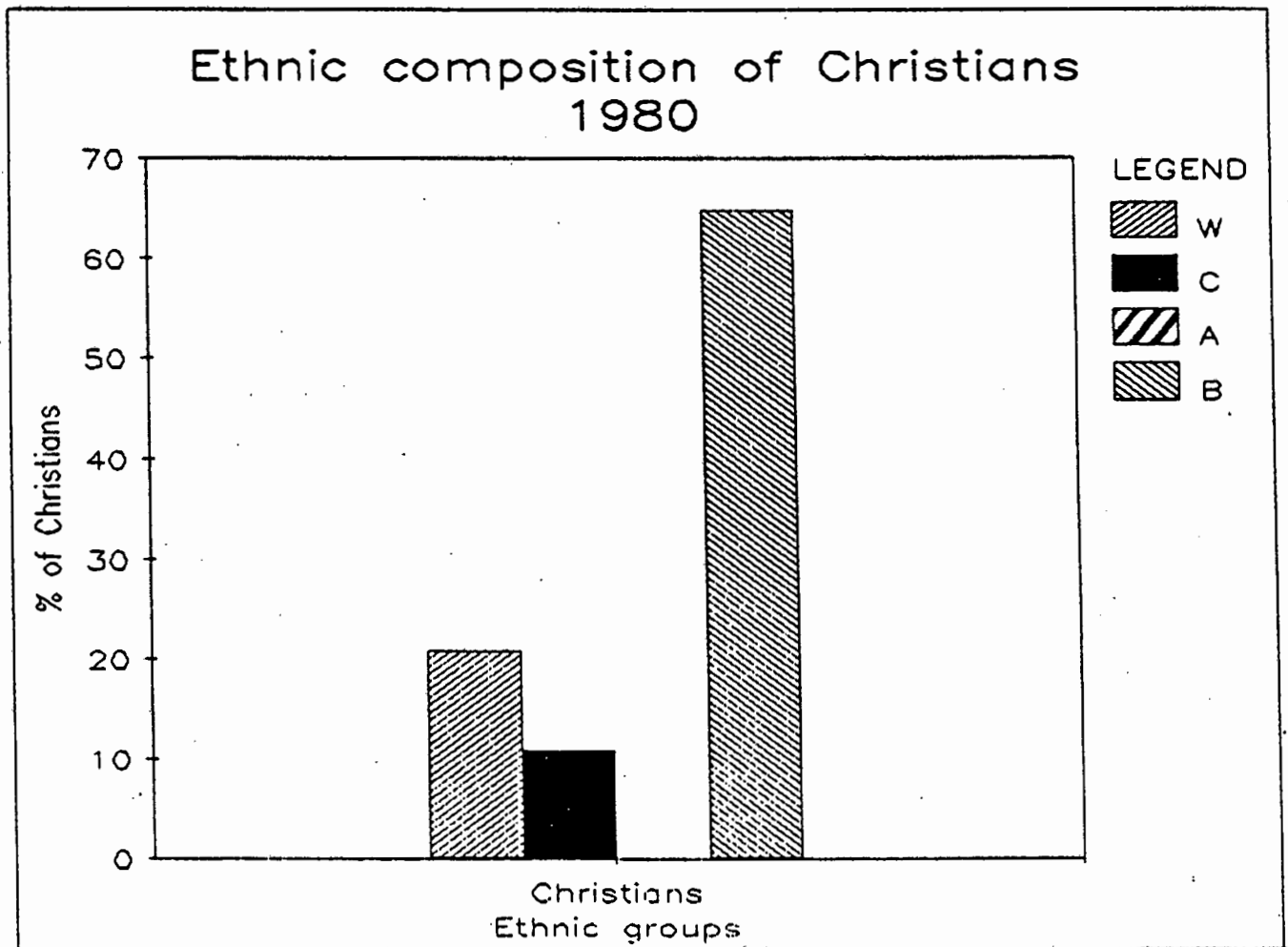
Graph 1 will reflect the composition of the main ethnical groups in the RSA (excluding the black independent Homelands). They are : Blacks - 16,9 million, Whites - 4,5 million, Coloureds - 2,6 million, Asians - 0,8 million. The black ethnical groups (including all the independent Homelands) can be divided into the NGUNI group - 12,5 million, which comprises the Zulu - 5,68 million, Xhosa - 5,6 million, Swazi - 0,85 million, Southern Ndebele - 0,39 million. The SOTHO group - 7,2 million, comprises of the Tswana - 2,86 million, Northern Sotho - 2,3 million, Southern Sotho - 1,7 million, Northern Ndebele - 0,26 million. Those remaining are Shangaan/Tsonga - 0,99 million, Venda - 0,53 million, other - 0,1 million.

GRAPH 1:



Graph 2 reflects the ethnic composition of Christians in the RSA (excluding the Homelands) in 1980.<sup>656</sup>

GRAPH 2:

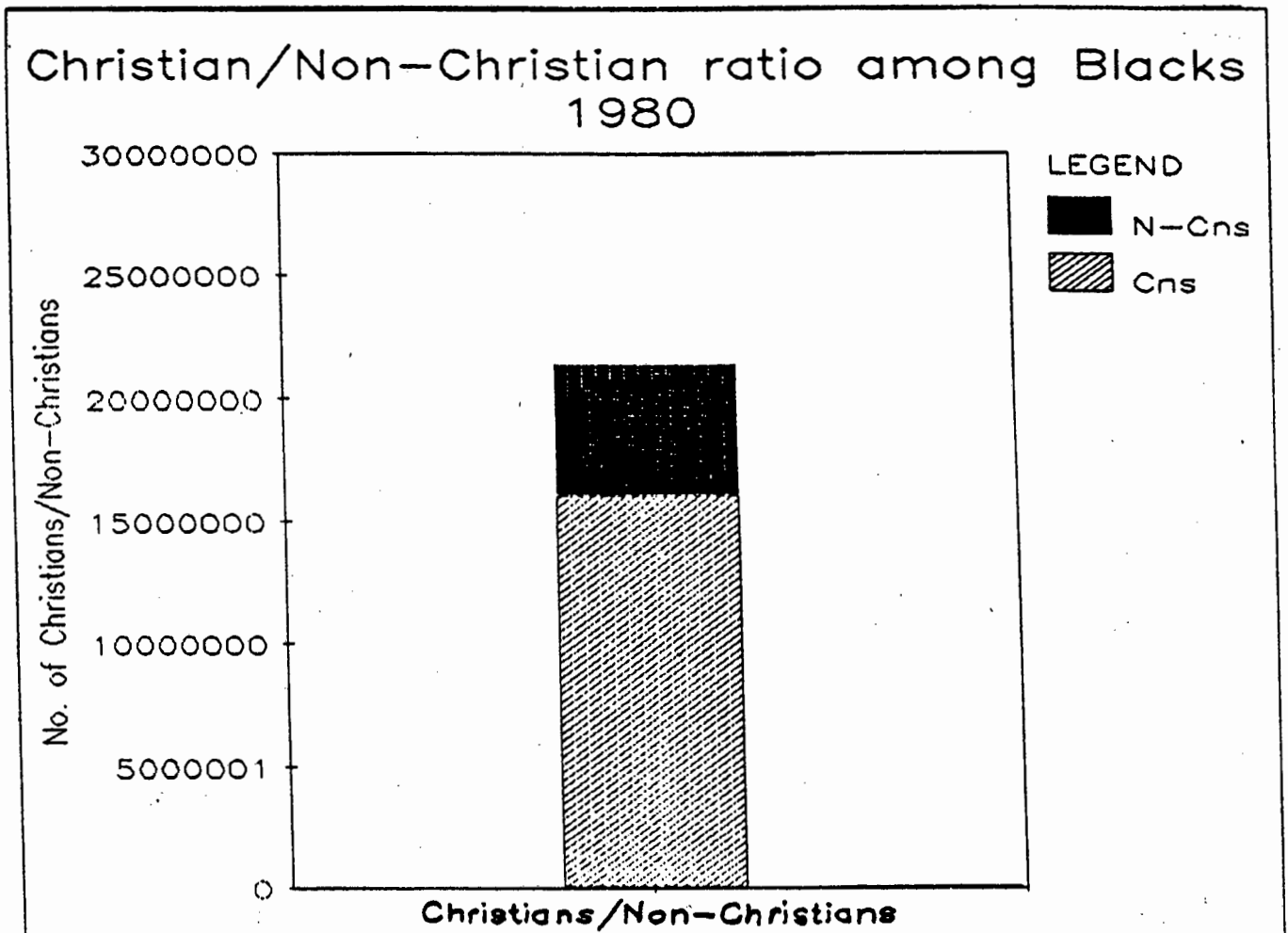


The biggest group of christians in the RSA in 1980, is the Blacks - 12,5 million (65,7%), followed by the Whites - 4,1 million (21,8%), Coloureds - 2,2 million (11,9%), Asians - 0,10 million (0,6%).

<sup>656</sup>Kritzinger. op. cit. p.34.

Graph 3 reflects the Christian/ Non-Christian ratio among Blacks in the RSA in 1980.<sup>657</sup>

GRAPH 3:



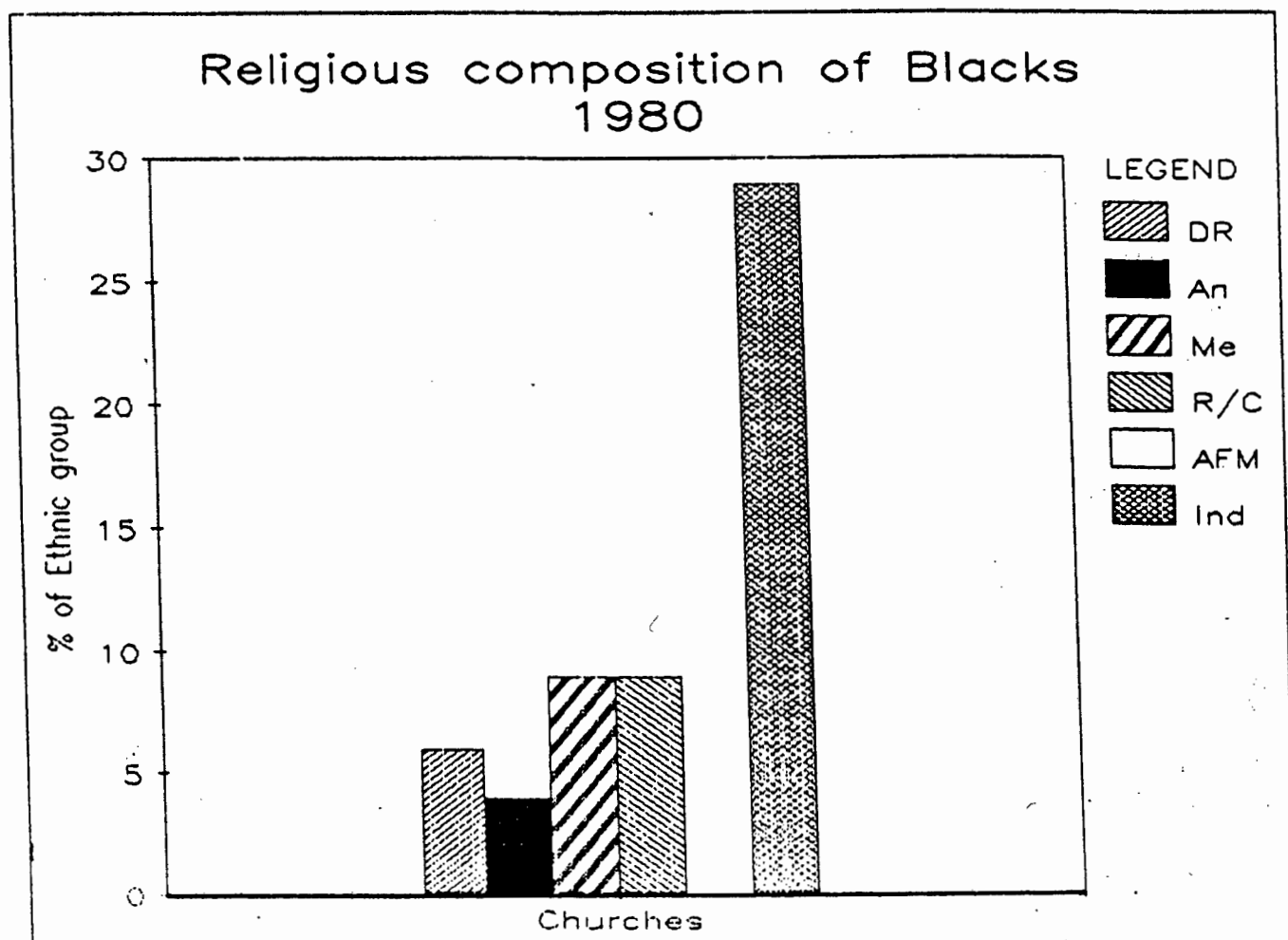
According to the 1980 government census 16,076 million Blacks (75,1%) belong to a Christian Church. That means that 5,326 Million (24,9%) must still be reached with the gospel of Christ.

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<sup>657</sup> Kritzinger. op. cit. p.24.

Graph 4 shows the religious composition of the Blacks as adherents of the five biggest Churches. The AFM in Africa is added in order to get the correct perspective of its size in comparison with the biggest Churches.<sup>658</sup>

GRAPH 4:



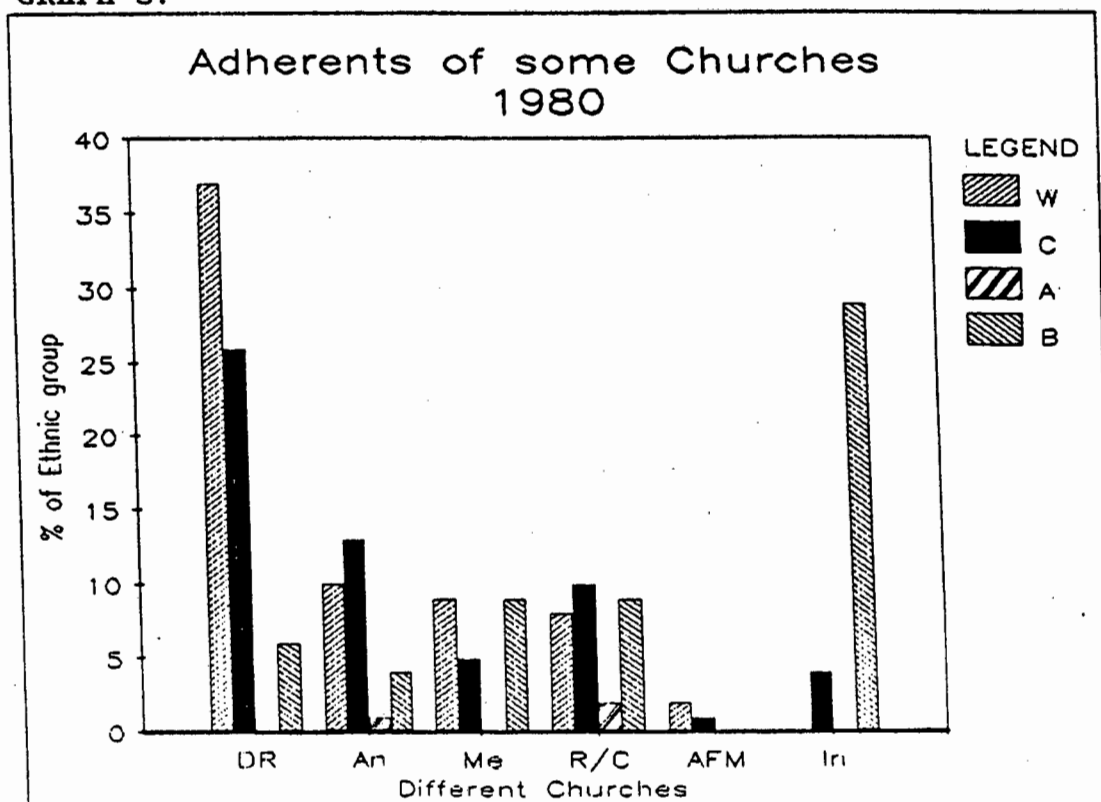
The Churches with the most adherents among the Blacks are:  
African Independent Churches - 5,8 million (27,3%),

<sup>658</sup>Kritzinger. op. cit. p.24.

Methodists - 2,4 million (11,3%), Roman Catholic - 2 million (9,4%), Dutch Reform - 1,3 million (6,1%), Anglican - 1,2 million (5,7%). According to Kritzinger (Governmental census) the AFM had only 141,000 adherents (0,7%) in 1980. This differs significantly from the AFM's statistics as will be shown later.<sup>659</sup>

Graph 5 shows the White, Coloured, Asian and Black adherents as each ethnic group relates to the size of that specific Church and as a percentage of Christianity in the RSA.<sup>660</sup>

GRAPH 5:



<sup>659</sup> According to the AFM they had 183,600 black members in 1980.

<sup>660</sup> Kritzinger. op. cit., p.22.

The Dutch Reformed Church comprises: Whites - 37,4%, Coloureds - 26%, Blacks - 6,5%, Asians - 0,5%. Methodist Church : Blacks - 9,2%, Whites - 9,1%, Coloureds - 5,4%, Asians - 0,5%. Anglican Church: Coloureds - 13,5%, Whites - 10,1%, Blacks - 4,7%, Asians - 1,1%. Roman Catholic Church: Coloureds - 10,1%, Blacks - 9,9%, Whites - 8,7%, Asians - 2,6%. African Independent Churches: Blacks 29,3%, Coloureds - 4,5. AFM: Whites - 2,8%, Coloureds - 1,9%, Blacks - 0,7%. Again it must be pointed out that there is a significant difference between the above figures for the AFM and their own statistics.

From the above data the following interesting facts emerge:

- There are almost 4,5 Black Christians for every White church member.

- Only Asian Christians are a small minority (12.5%).

- Of all the Black ethnic groups only the Vendas and Shangaan/Tsongas are more or less equally divided between Christians and traditionalists.

- With almost 6 million adherents the African Independent Churches are the biggest religious group in South Africa.

Almost 1 out of every 5 people in South Africa is a member, which means almost 30% of all Blacks.

- 77% of South Africa's population is part of a Christian group.

- The majority of non-christians are probably black traditionists. However a significant part of all ethnic groups adhere to no religion.

- Kritzinger make this significant observation:

Die plattelandse Swart bevolking is betekenisvol minder kerklik ingeskakel as die stedelike bevolking....

Ongeveer 4 miljoen van die 15 miljoen Swart plattelanders is dus nie by n Christelike Kerk ingeskakel nie - in die RSA is dit prakties 1 uit elke 3.<sup>661</sup>

#### B. The AFM in Africa:

Although the data gained from the government census (1980) was used for an overall view of the religious situation in South Africa it was not used for the statistics of the AFM, for reasons already mentioned. Even comparing it with that of the AFM was hardly fruitful.<sup>662</sup> Kritzinger himself admits:

Die enigste kerklike bron wat enigsins met die bevolkingsensus se gegewens vergelyk kan word, is die van die Ned Geref Kerk wat in Maart 1981 n landwye Kerkensus vir die Kerk van stapel gestuur het.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>661</sup>Kritzinger. op. cit., p.13.

<sup>662</sup>This is also true of other churches. See: De Gruchy, John W.: "Christians in Conflict: The Social Reality of the South African Church", in Journal of Theology for South Africa. No.51, June 1985, p.19.

<sup>663</sup>Kritzinger. op. cit., p.3.

He also mentions that , "In die Noord-Transvaal, waar vergelykings vir n paar Kerkgenootskappe gedoen is, was die verskil so groot as 50%".<sup>664</sup>

As is the case with a majority of Third-World churches, a number of problems are encountered in the search for workable, reliable statistics of the AFM in Africa. As statistics were never high on their list of priorities, annual census reports were only put into practice as late as 1970. Although these reports were made annually, they lacked essential information such as the number of church members for example. As far as that was concerned missionaries were only obliged to report the number of assemblies in their district.

To get more or less of an idea of the membership of the AFM in Africa the Missions Department allocated 150 members to each assembly.<sup>665</sup> This "educated guess" was used irrespective of established assemblies that sometimes had more than 150 members, and branch-assemblies that had less than 150 members. As nothing more accurate exists we will comply with it. Because of this we will also make no differentiation between existing assemblies and branch

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid., p.6.

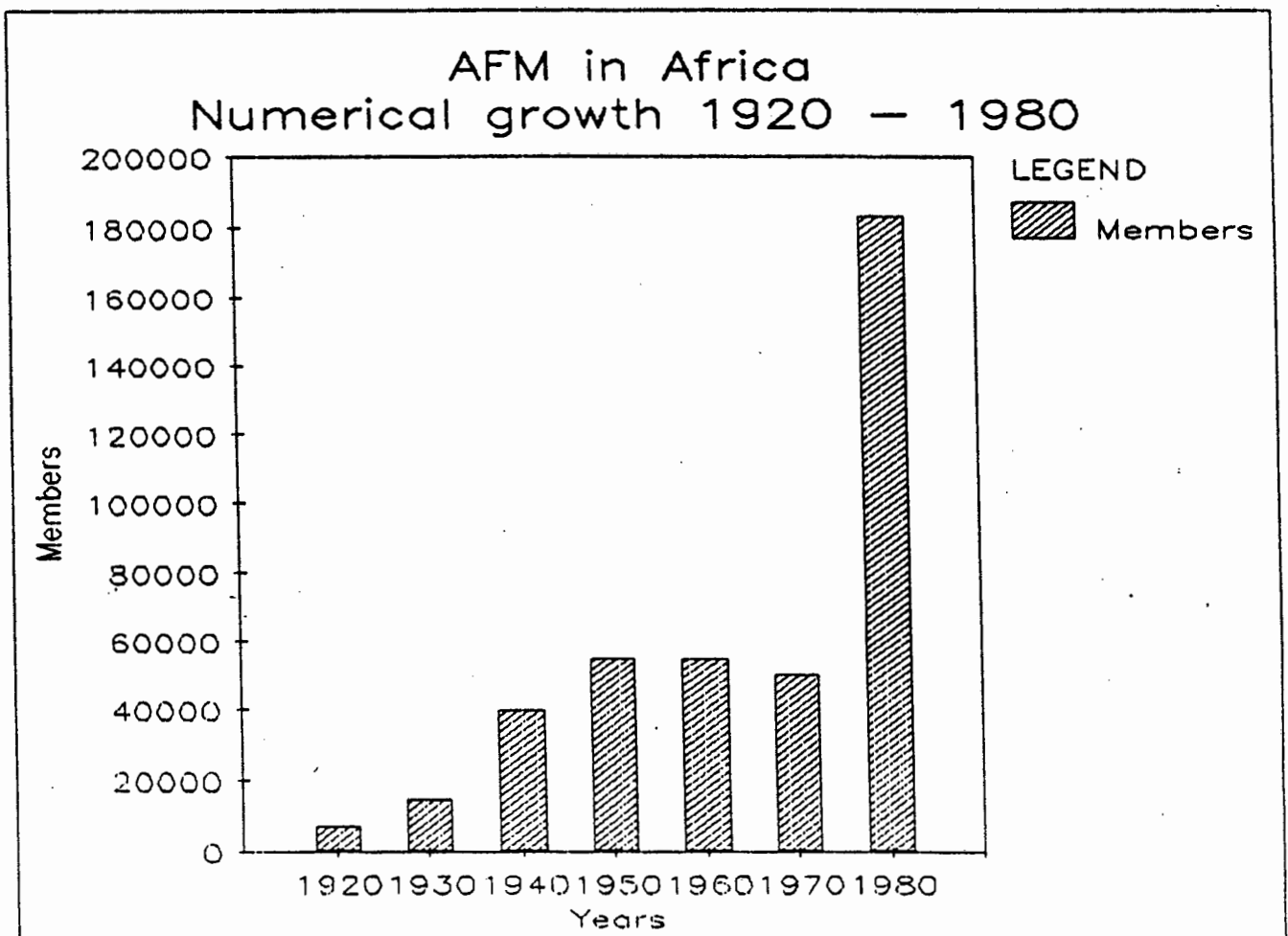
<sup>665</sup> Werkersraadverslag: 1980. Report of Missions Department, p.23, Available from AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.



assemblies as it will eventually have no effect on the statistics. Any data prior to 1970 that we will be using was obtained from mission reports at the annual Workers Council meetings, and from the Minutes of the white Executive Council.

The first statistics on the membership of the AFM in Africa seems to be in 1920. A graph of the numerical growth of the AFM in Africa from 1920 - 1980 looks like this:

GRAPH 6:



Their decadal growth in membership was: 1920 - 7500;<sup>666</sup> 1930 - 15,000; 1940 - 40,000;<sup>667</sup> 1950 - 55,430;<sup>668</sup> 1960 - 55,430 (Used the same statistic as in 1950 because no other data was found); 1970 - 50,550; 1980 - 183,600.<sup>669</sup> The average annual growth rate (AAGR) over this period was 5,47% and the decadal growth rate (DGR) 70,3%.

Because more statistical data was available for the decadal period 1971 - 1980, and because this corresponds with the decadal governmental censuses, we will focus on this period.<sup>670</sup>

The AAGR in assemblies over this period was 17,4% and the DGR was 229,2%. The total number of assemblies grew from 337 in 1971 to 1228 in 1980. Table 1 also shows the growth in assemblies per district in this decade.

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<sup>666</sup> Oosthuizen, G.C.: The Pentecostal Penetration into the Indian Community of South Africa. Durban: Interprint, p.88. He gave the statistics for both 1920 and 1930.

<sup>667</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 1939.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid., 1948. Membership in 1948 - 52671 plus baptized in 1949 - 2759 = 55,430.

<sup>669</sup> Werkersraad: 1971, 1981, Report of Mission Department. Available at the AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>670</sup> Source for all data 1971 - 1980: Werkersraad: 1971 - 1980. Reports of Missions Department

TABLE 1:

Growth in assemblies per district: 1971 - 1980

DISTRICTS	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	AAGR	DGR
N.W.Cape	(New District)			3	2	3	3	4	15	15	30%	1365%
E.Cape		9	9	10	9	10	16	16	16	18	9%	137%
W.Cape		5	4	9	9	11	11	19	10	10	9%	137%
Natal		129	139	154	232	244	273	273	273	335	12%	229%
N.OFS		31	27	28	28	30	30	30	26	36	1,9%	20%
S.OFS		13	14	26	30	24	24	22	21	21	6%	82%
Pretoria		27	32	35	37	57	60	60	64	70	12%	228%
E.Rand		16	14	20	15	15	14	15	15	16	0%	0%
W.Rand		15	39	39	33	38	46	60	60	51	16%	361%
Namibia		6	5	9	6	9	9	9	10	18	14%	294%
E.TVL		42	42	41	49	50	50	60	60	60	4%	56%
N.TVL		86	86	86	94	94	110	110	90	186	10%	159%
W.TVL		31	34	32	45	45	45	45	45	54	7%	100%
Transkei	(No statistics available)	240	240	272	308	314	316	320	320	318	3%	41%

GRAPH 7:

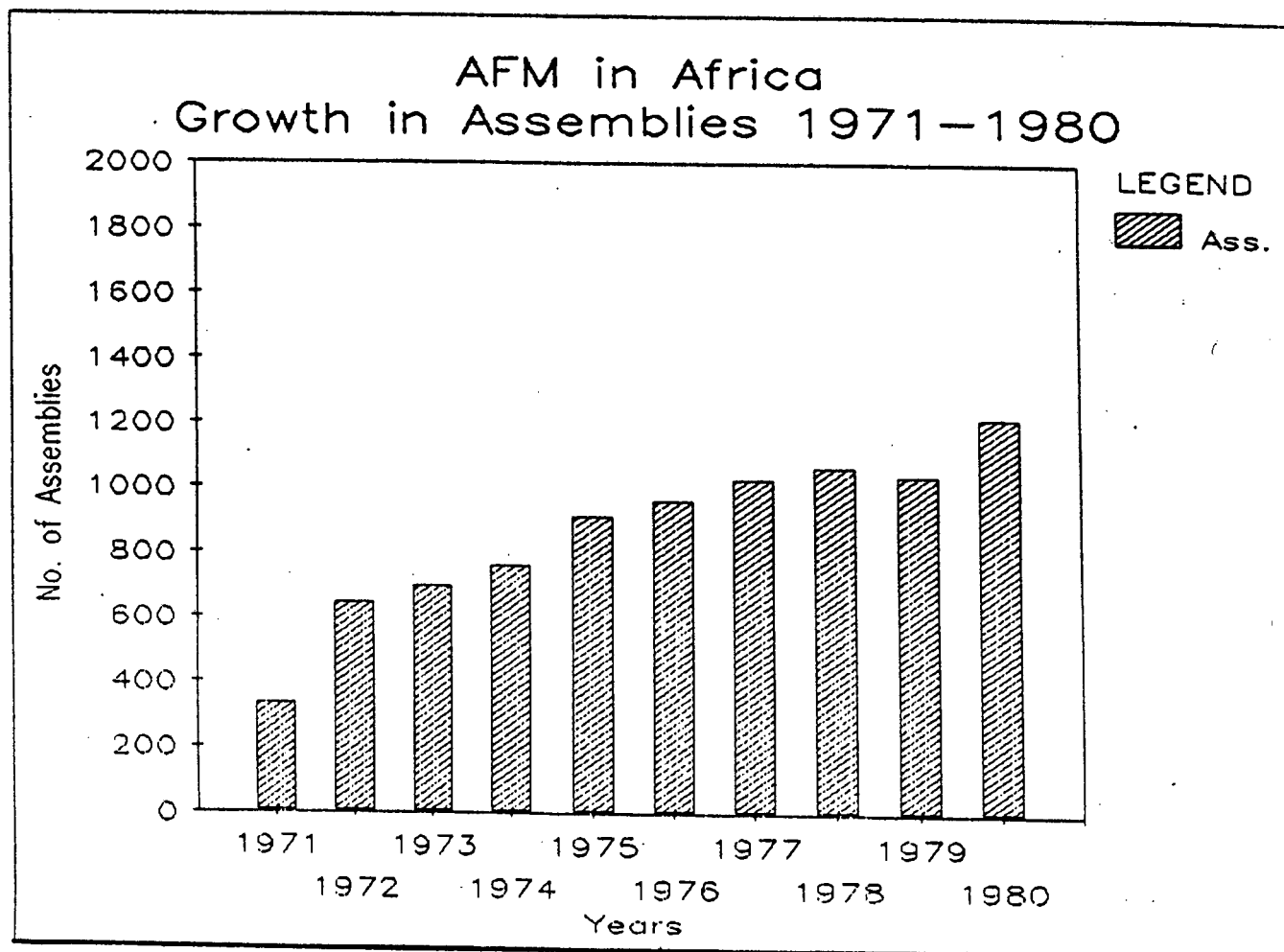


TABLE 2:

Growth in activities: 1971 - 1980

	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
Sunday Schools		483	442	481	525	511	511	564	590	695
Young People Unions		167	171	251	262	282	282	299	317	455
Full-time Workers	111	106	104	204*	250	282	288	297	340	506
Church Buildings		162	155	189	196	198	198	215	211	231
Parsonages		39	55	60	60	69	69	89	94	109

\* From 1974 Evangelists (non-ordained full-time workers) were added.

GRAPH 8:

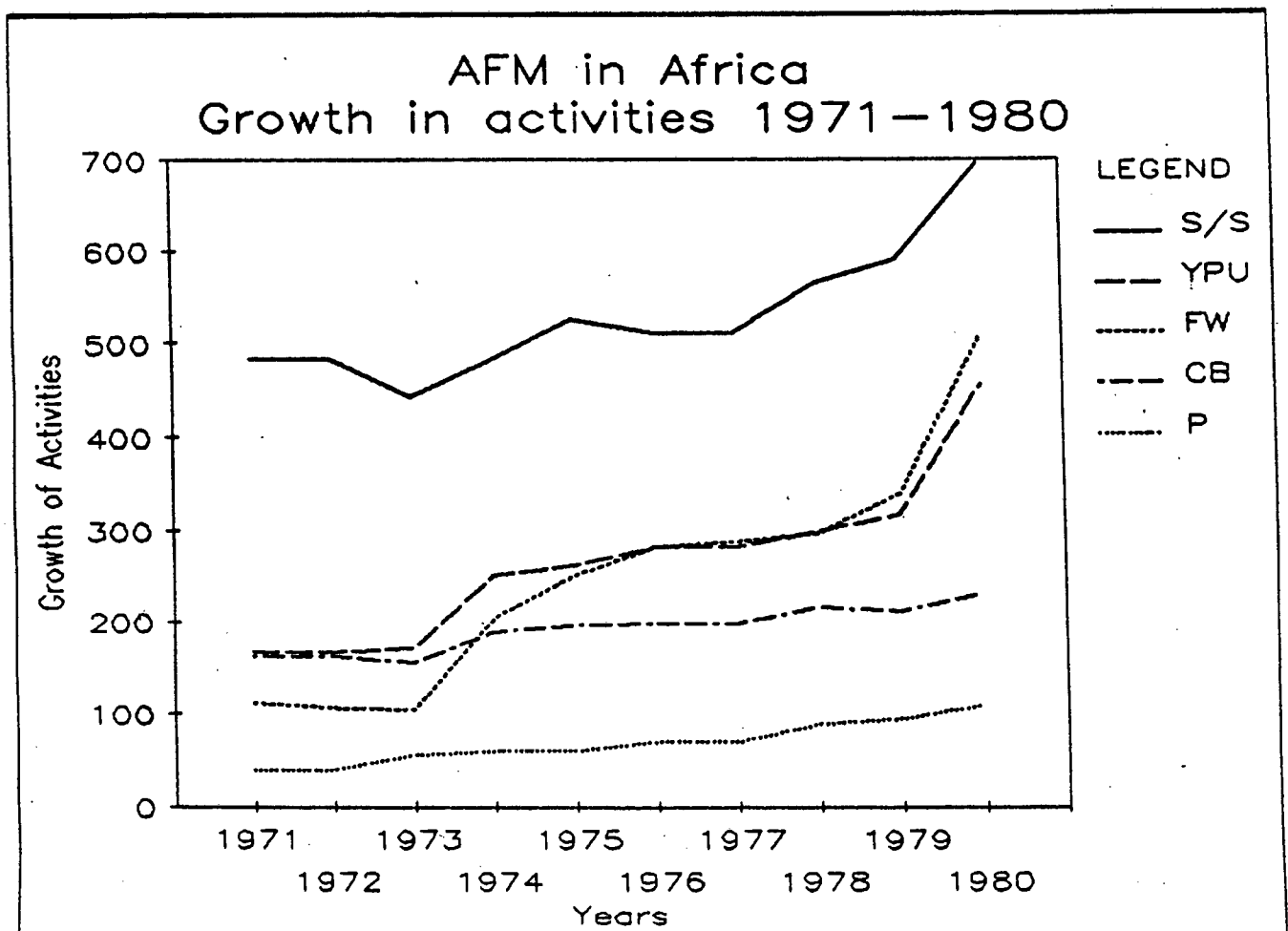
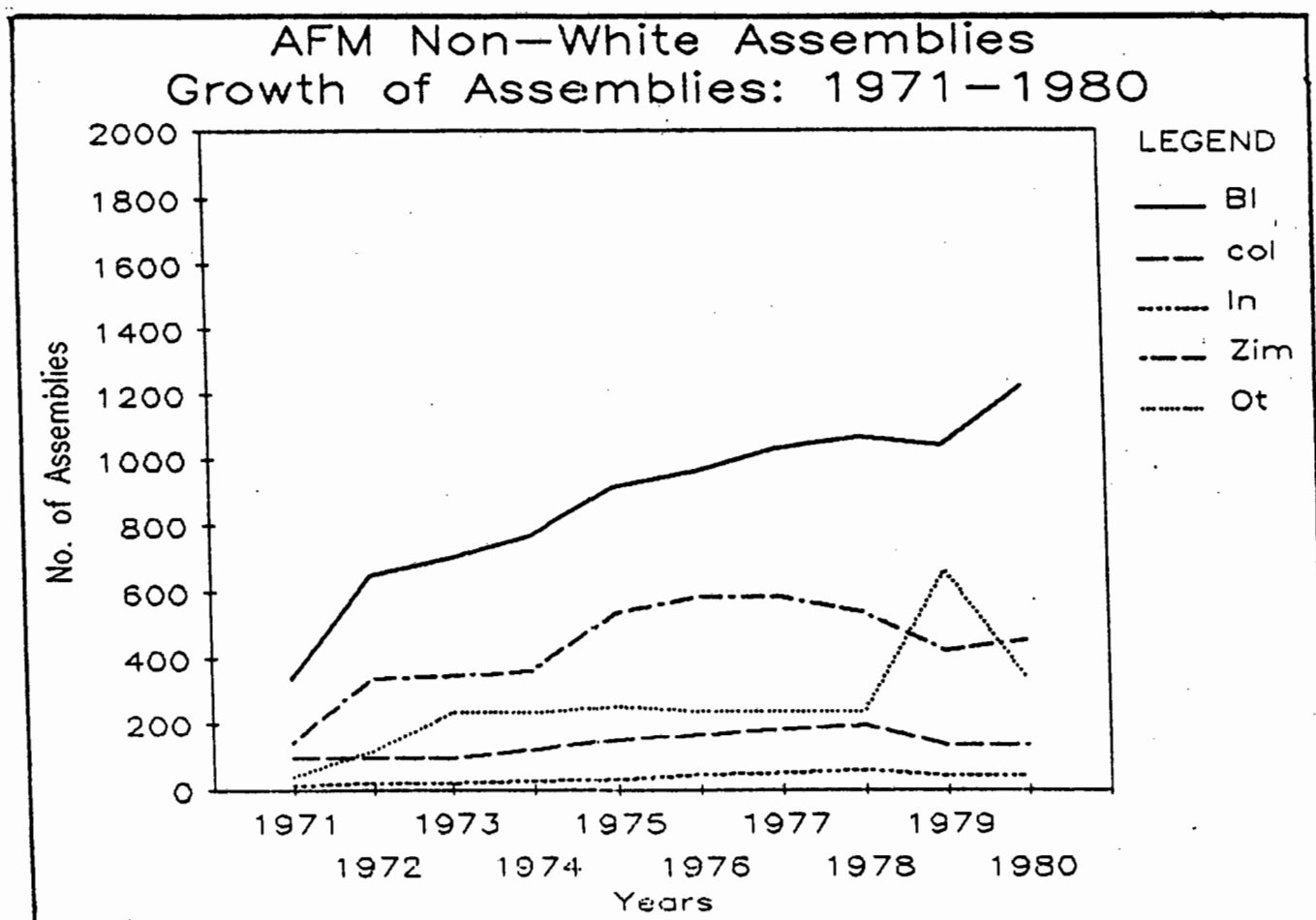


Table 2 shows the growth during this decade in the following activities: Sunday Schools (S/S), Young People Unions (YPU), all Full-time workers (FW), Church Buildings (CB) and Parsonages (P). Graph 8 shows this data in graphical form.

Graph 9 shows the growth of the AFM in Africa (Bl) in relation to the growth/decline of the Coloureds (Col), Indians (In), black AFM in Zimbabwe (Zim), and the black AFM churches in other African countries (Ot). Apparently the AFM in Africa shows the best growth. In the following chapter we will examine this growth from the perspective of the Church Growth Movement.

GRAPH 9:



## CHAPTER 7: A CHURCH GROWTH EVALUATION OF THE AFM IN AFRICA

The Church Growth Movement is the first to admit that the reasons why a church experiences growth or lack of growth are complex.<sup>671</sup> However,

Church growth research has shown that a complex interplay of four sets of factors largely determine growth or nongrowth. These sets are national contextual factors, local contextual factors, national institutional factors and local institutional factors.<sup>672</sup>

According to Waymire and Wagner, contextual factors refer to the context in which the church or churches find themselves. They include sociological, anthropological, demographic and other factors. In most cases the contextual factors are beyond the control of the church or denomination. National contextual factors include the government's attitude toward Christianity, persecution, wars, migrations, trade patterns, economic and political conditions etc. Local contextual factors refer to the city, town, neighborhood or district in which a particular church is located. They include ethnicity, changing neighborhoods,

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<sup>671</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: Church Growth Principles and Procedures - M660, Lecture outlines, 1981, Basic considerations, p.8.

<sup>672</sup>Waymire, Bob and C. Peter Wagner: The Church Growth Survey Handbook. Santa Clara: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980, p.23.

urbanization, industrialization, population growth or decline, caste or tribal conditions, languages etc.

Institutional factors refer to conditions within the particular Christian body being studied. National (or at times regional) institutional factors include decisions and policies made by the denomination or district or mission, priorities for evangelism and church planting, church-mission relationships, policies effecting indigeneity, openness to new ideas, etc. Each church has internal situations that help or hinder growth. Local institutional factors include the local pastor, the motivation of pastor and people for growth, evangelistic methodology, small group dynamics, openness to newcomers, facilities, spiritual level of the people, etc.

Using the above mentioned general categories, let us evaluate the "growth-factors" of the AFM in Africa critically. We will not discuss these factors in order of priority, although some are clearly more significant than others. As most of them were previously comprehensively discussed, we will here only make some observations and evaluations.

## CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

### Apartheid and the Socio-Economic Status of Blacks:

Without going into too much detail, a few observations will suffice. Table 3 gives a good overview of the socio-economic features of Blacks in South Africa in 1980, in relation to the other main ethnic groups.<sup>673</sup>

TABLE 3:

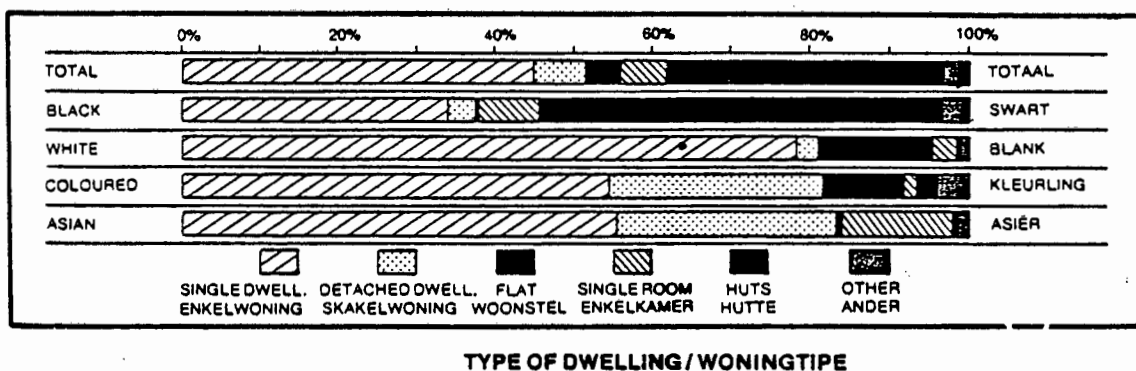
Socio-Economic features Sosiaal-ekonomiese kenmerke	Total Totaal	Black Swart	White Blank	Coloured Kleurling	Asian Asiër
<i>Average Income (Rand annually) Gemiddelde Inkomste (Rand per jaar)</i>					
Personal (per economically active person) Persoonlik (per ekonomiesaktiewe persoon)	R3 130	R1 189	R8 035	R1 843	R3 266
Family (per household) Gesin (per huishouding)	R13 027	-	R15 656	R2 323	R7 068
<i>Not economically active (% of total population) Nie-ekonomiesaktiewes (% van totale bevolking)</i>	65,2%	67,1%	57,9%	64,5%	68,9%
<i>Occupation (% of economically active population): Beroep (% van ekonomiesaktiewe bevolking):</i>					
Professional and Technical Professioneel en Tegniek	7,9%	3,6%	19,8%	6,0%	9,3%
Administrative and Managerial Administratief en Bestuurend	1,7%	0,1%	6,7%	0,4%	1,8%
Clerical workers Klerklike werkers	10,5%	4,1%	26,9%	8,1%	21,8%
Sales workers Verkoopswerkers	5,8%	3,4%	10,4%	4,5%	15,3%
Service workers Dienswerkers	18,1%	22,5%	8,3%	17,8%	6,8%
Production and Transport workers Produk- en Vervoerwerkers	38,9%	43,6%	23,2%	45,2%	42,7%
Fishermen, Farm and Forestry workers Visser, Plaas- en Bosbouwerkers	17,3%	22,7%	4,7%	18,0%	2,4%
<i>Industry (% of economically active population): Bedryf (% van ekonomiesaktiewe bevolking):</i>					
Commerce and Accommodation Handel en Akkommodasie	12,9%	11,1%	16,0%	12,4%	27,2%
Finance, Insurance and Fixed property Finansiering, Versekering en Vaste eiendom	3,7%	1,1%	11,2%	1,8%	4,0%
Community and Personal services Gemeenskaps- en Persoonlike dienste	25,4%	25,9%	25,7%	25,0%	14,0%
Transport and Communication Vervoer en Kommunikasie	5,4%	3,7%	10,3%	4,5%	5,8%
Manufacturing Fabriekswese	18,6%	15,9%	19,4%	26,9%	40,0%
Construction Konstruksie	5,8%	5,4%	5,5%	9,4%	4,7%
Electricity and Water Elektrisiteit en Water	1,0%	0,9%	1,6%	0,8%	0,4%
Mining Mynbou	10,5%	14,7%	4,8%	1,5%	0,8%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Landbou, Bosbou en Visvangs	16,7%	21,4%	5,5%	17,7%	3,2%

<sup>673</sup> Zietsman, H.L., Van Der Merwe, I.J.: Population Census Atlas of SA. Stellenbosch: Institute for Cartographic Analysis, University of Stellenbosch, 1986, Table 2.



Blacks' personal average income per economically active person is only R1189. The economically not active, as percentage of the total population is a staggering 67,1%. The majority 43,6% are employed as production and transport workers, and of this the vast majority 89,5%, are employees, in the private sector. Sadly, 8,5% is unemployed. The 1980 urbanisation level of the various ethnic population groups in South Africa as a whole is recorded in graph 11.<sup>674</sup> More will be said about it later on. Graph 10 illustrates the type of dwelling of blacks in relation to the other main ethnic groups.<sup>675</sup>

GRAPH 10:



<sup>674</sup>See p.

<sup>675</sup>Zietsman, op. cit., Diagram 10.

The majority of blacks are living either in huts, which could include certain forms of squatting in urban areas, or in single-dwellings, which are freestanding low density houses on individual sites. Single rooms represent hostels and compounds.

The above statistics make it vividly clear that blacks in South Africa can in general be regarded as the "poor", the "masses", those living on the "fringe of society", the "disinherited". Frank Chikane describes life in apartheid South Africa for blacks as,

a life of struggle, a struggle for survival and a struggle to be free from the oppressive white minority regime. It is a struggle against a host of apartheid laws which are geared to stifling the lives of blacks. It is a struggle to survive against laws that protect white interests against those of blacks, making whites more privileged than blacks.<sup>676</sup>

Nico Smith, who lives among blacks in a black township, is adamant that the evil character of this ideology is increasingly being revealed by its fruits.<sup>677</sup> Actually,

there is only one fruit which includes all the effects of the system on people and their society. This fruit is violence.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>676</sup>Chikane, op. cit., p.95.

<sup>677</sup>Smith N.J.: "Apartheid in South Africa as a sin and heresy: some of its roots and fruits", in New Faces of Africa (ed. J.W. Hofmeyr & W.S. Vorster). Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1984, p.147.

<sup>678</sup>Ibid., p.148.

According to Smith the following forms of violence arising from the apartheid system can be differentiated.<sup>679</sup> Firstly, violence against the unity of the church. Secondly, violence against human dignity. Thirdly, violence against the harmony in society.

Considering the high premium that blacks place on community, unlike the individualism of whites, apartheid must be absolutely repugnant to them. MacRobert enhances our view, saying

in African primal religion, ethics are not so much a matter of personal morality or righteousness as of refraining from anti-social activity.<sup>680</sup>

For the majority of South Africans the fundamental indignity of apartheid is tragically still very alive. Johann Groenewald says,

mense is steeds die gevangenes van die stigma wat aan ras en kleur geheg is en in statutere kategoriee vasgevang is, en waarmee effektief die toegang tot wettige mag, en daarmee lewenskanse, bepaal word.<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Ibid., pp.148-151.

<sup>680</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.17.

<sup>681</sup> Groenewald, Johann: "Die Uitwerking van Apartheid: Sosiologiese Aspekte", in Regverdige Rasse-Apartheid (ed. Johann Kinghorn). Braamfontein: Macmillan, 1986, p.42.

# Apartheid in the AFM in Africa, and the Homogeneous Unit Principle:

Apartheid has had some positive effects on the growth of the AFM in Africa. This does not imply any condoning of it. For example the "group areas act", which resulted in separate living areas for the main ethnic groups meant that homogeneous groups with the same culture, language were involuntarily maintained. In practice this made evangelism and church planting much easier. As already noted, according to McGavran, "men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers".<sup>682</sup> Realistically recognizing this sociological fact does not mean placing a seal of approval on segregation, discrimination, racism or apartheid. Because this Church Growth principle can be so easily misunderstood as promoting apartheid, we should scrutinize it closely.

"The homogeneous unit principle is by far the most controversial of all Church Growth principles", admits Peter Wagner.<sup>683</sup> McGavran and Arn define a homogeneous unit as "a group of people who all have some characteristic in common and feel that they belong."<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.198.

<sup>683</sup> Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.129

<sup>684</sup> McGavran, Donald and Arn, Win C.: Ten Steps for Church Growth. New York: Harper & Row. 1977, p.129.

According to McGavran, biblical barriers such as "the cross, the need to repent, to be baptized, to give up known sins etc.... must remain", but non-biblical barriers must not be erected. McGavran states confidently that

we must make sure that we ask people to become Christians where they don't have to cross barriers of language and culture and class and wealth and style of life. Every man should be able to become a Christian with his own kind of people.<sup>685</sup>

People will go to church where they feel at home and where they feel that they belong. The Homogeneous Unit Principle realistically recognizes this sociological fact of life.

Francis DuBose affirms the usefulness of the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP), but nevertheless insists that it must be applied in balance with what he calls "the heterogeneous principle". His strongest reaction is in particular to McGavran's statement about how men "like" to become Christians. DuBose says,

No man establishes the terms on which he will receive the gospel - the gospel establishes its own terms. The question is not what one likes to do to be saved, but what one must do to be saved. The crux of the theological problem with this principle is that it operates on the assumption that the strongest ties which bind people are the human ties of culture. In the final analysis it treats evangelism like any other human transaction and the church like any other social organization. We ask the question: Where is the transcendent dimension?<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>685</sup> McGavran, Donald and Arn, Win C.: How to Grow a Church. Glendale: Regal, 1973, p.45.

<sup>686</sup> DuBose, Francis M.: How Churches Grow in an Urban World. Nashville: Broadman Press. 1978, p.126

Peter Wagner argues that the HUP should only be seen for what it really is, namely a tool which many have found helpful in implementing the evangelistic mandate. For him, McGavran's statement is in the first place "descriptive", not "normative". It is phenomenological, not theological. McGavran does not say "men ought to become Christians" but rather that "men like to become Christians".

For over two decades critics have attempted to find empirical evidence which would refute it, but to no avail. It has become quite clear that there is little or no evidence to the contrary. By this I do not mean that there <sup>687</sup>is no exceptions to the rule. Of course there are.

Secondly, McGavran's statement relates to discipling, not perfecting. <sup>688</sup>

It is a principle of evangelism, not Christian nurture. The 'men' of the statement refers to men (and of course women) who are unbelievers. If the gospel is presented in such a way that it carries racial overtones, and if becoming a Christian involves a social rather than a religious or spiritual decision, <sup>689</sup>most of them will not even hear it.

Wagner admits that it appears to some that encouraging the formation of homogeneous unit churches is implicitly placing a seal of approval on segregation, discrimination, racism, the caste system and apartheid.

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<sup>687</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.167

<sup>688</sup>See Footnote 627

<sup>689</sup>Ibid, p. 168

But just as a knife can be used as an instrument of mercy in a surgical operation or as an instrument of horror in a murder, the HUP can be used for good or for bad. Properly applied, it can be an effective force to reduce racism; wrongly applied, it can support racism. It must be admitted that the principle carries with it an element of risk.<sup>690</sup>

This is, we submit the kind of risk, which at this time in the history of churches in South Africa, not too many level-headed, clear thinking leaders would want to take. To Wagner, homogeneity aids the evangelistic mandate, whereas heterogeneity aids the cultural mandate. The question for biblical Christians to answer is how to do them both? Wagner answers,

Evangelize strenuously. The Lausanne Covenant is correct in stating that in the total mission of the church evangelism is primary. My second answer is: Teach believers that God's people are all one in Christ. Make every effort to relate Christians of different homogeneous units to each other on appropriate structural levels.<sup>691</sup>

Wagner however states it very clearly that the HUP rejects structural racism. "There is no room in the thinking of Church Growth people for a church that is racist or segregationist." At the same time, the HUP rejects assimilationist racism. "The Church Growth Movement refuses to say, by word or by deed, that in order to become Christian, you must become like me."<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>690</sup>Ibid., p.169

<sup>691</sup>Ibid., p.170 -171

<sup>692</sup>Ibid., p.179

Another very important argument for the HUP that McGavran uses frequently must be mentioned here. When McGavran translates the part of Matthew 28:19, "all the nations" - panta ta ethne - he interprets it as referring to "the classes, tribes, lineages and people of the earth"<sup>693</sup> Thus ethne is interpreted in an ethnological or sociological sense; it refers to homogeneous units of people sharing common characteristics, particularly a common racial, linguistic and class heritage. When Jesus used the expression panta ta ethne, he had in mind "families of mankind - tongues, tribes, castes and lineages of man. That is exactly what ta ethne means .... in Matthew 28:19."<sup>694</sup> Most Church Growth advocates underwrite this exegesis of panta ta ethne.

To this, Bosch argues,

There is, of course, validity in the argument that the gospel should be communicated in an intelligible way and be contextualized in the culture of the people who are being evangelized. Nobody can fault this. The question is, however, whether this is what Matthew 28:19 says. Has not a modern problem been read back into the text (Liefeld 1978:177)? The evidence shows that this is indeed what has happened.<sup>695</sup>

After a very solid exposition of panta ta ethne, Bosch concludes,

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<sup>693</sup> McGavran, 1980, op. cit., p.22.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid., p.56

<sup>695</sup> Bosch, 1983, op. cit., p.236.



An unbiased reading of Matthew 28:19 can therefore not take it to imply that the Christian mission is to be carried out 'people by people', but that it is to reach far beyond the confines that existed up to that time.<sup>696</sup>

Most scholars, however, accept that panta ta ethne is used here in a completely unrestricted sense, referring to Gentiles and Jews alike. The issue behind the use of the word ethne is thus completely unrelated to the question of homogeneous units. It is the issue of 'salvation history'. The New Covenant is to be absolutely universal and the only point that has to be discerned is whether the Jews are still included or not. I agree with those scholars who say they are, and that panta ta ethne is to be interpreted without any restriction whatsoever.<sup>697</sup>

After making a thorough study of the HUP, Bosch states,

Undoubtedly there is validity in the Church Growth Movement's honoring of the homogeneous unit principle as a communications guideline. We may, however, not take a communications principle and make it an ecclesiological norm by reasoning that (1) homogeneous churches grow more rapidly than others; (2) all churches should grow more rapidly; and (3) therefore all churches should be culturally and socially homogeneous. This reasoning cannot but lead to a wrong view of the church.

Exclusive grouping of believers, whether around individual leaders for theological or other reasons (I Cor. 1:10-13) or around homogeneous cultural units are unacceptable in the Christian Church.<sup>698</sup>

W.A. Saayman, after a historical study of NGK policy of segregation in the church and the role it played in the whole apartheid ideology, warns justly that people involved in using the "people group" approach in which the importance of cultural homogeneity in group evangelism is rated highly,

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<sup>696</sup> Ibid., p.236

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., p.237

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., pp.239-240

could benefit greatly from studying the history of the missions in South Africa.

This would be especially valuable in the area of creating an awareness of the dangers which are inherent in adopting an approach aimed specifically at a certain group, and excluding others, although at the time they may seem nothing more than a practical aid in facilitating evangelism.<sup>699</sup>

Rene Padilla is right when he contends,

Throughout the entire New Testament the oneness of the people of God as a oneness that transcends all outward distinctions is taken for granted.<sup>700</sup>

This he ably proves by examining the New Testament.<sup>701</sup> Padilla acknowledges that the growth of the church takes place in specific social and cultural context and that people prefer to become Christians without having to cross the barriers between one context and another. However, for him the real issue is whether this principle is essential for the spread of the Gospel, and biblically and theologically defensible.<sup>702</sup> Based on his study of the unity of the church in the New Testament Padilla concludes that firstly, in the early church the gospel was proclaimed to

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<sup>699</sup> Saayman, W.A.: "The Case of South Africa: Practice, Context and Ideology" in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1983, p.142

<sup>700</sup> Padilla, C. Rene: "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle", in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, p.285.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid., pp.285-299.

<sup>702</sup> Ibid., p.300.

all people, without partiality. Secondly, the breaking down of the barriers that separate people in the world was regarded as an essential aspect of the gospel, not merely as a result of it. Thirdly, the church not only grew, but it grew across cultural barriers. Fourthly, the New Testament clearly shows that the Apostles, while rejecting "assimilationist racism", never contemplated the possibility of forming homogeneous unit churches that would then express their unity in terms of interchurch relationships. Fifthly, there may have been times when the believers were accused of traitorously abandoning their own culture in order to join another culture, but there is no indication that the Apostles approved of adjustments made in order to avoid that charge. Padilla concludes by saying,

If these conclusions are correct, it is quite evident that the use of the homogeneous unit principle for church growth has no biblical foundation. Its advocates have taken as their starting point a sociological observation and developed a missionary strategy; only then, a posteriori,<sup>703</sup> have they made the attempt to find biblical support.

Lately, many of the earlier, easy affirmations of this "operational principle" have been challenged within the Church Growth Movement.<sup>704</sup> Eddie Gibbs' I Believe in Church

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<sup>703</sup> Ibid., p.301.

<sup>704</sup> Glasser, Arthur F.: "Church Growth at Fuller", in Missiology: An International Review, Vol.XIV, No.4, Oct.1986 p.417.

Growth, is evidence of this.<sup>705</sup> For Gibbs the positive values of the HUP are, that the concept heightens the Church's awareness of the unreached groups within a nation, county, or local district. It also underlines the need to adopt methods appropriate to the group which is to be reached, and sensitise the Church to the dangers of cultural imperialism.<sup>706</sup> Conversely, Gibbs boldly points out the dangers in overemphasising the HUP.

By elevating the homogeneous unit concept into a principle which is normative and universal the church growth movement has laid itself open to<sup>707</sup> misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

Secondly, when the HUP is elevated into a normative principle Church Growth advocates are forced to present convincing evidence to prove that the New Testament Church was structured on homogeneous lines. Along with Padilla and others, Gibbs acknowledges, "There is no clear evidence that this was the case".<sup>708</sup> Thirdly, an over-preoccupation with homogeneity and cultural identity to the exclusion of cross-cultural perspective can inhibit growth.<sup>709</sup> Fourthly,

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<sup>705</sup>Gibbs, Eddie: I Believe in Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981, pp.115-130.

<sup>706</sup>Gibbs identify with the position of Charles Kraft, namely that God, whilst being above culture, chooses to work through culture.

<sup>707</sup>Gibbs, op. cit., p.126.

<sup>708</sup>Ibid., p.127.

<sup>709</sup>The Toba Bataks ethnic group in Indonesia is a good  
(Footnote Continued)

the HUP presents an incomplete strategy for an urban society who moves between a number of homogeneous groups and heterogeneous situations.

Ebbie Smith adds to Gibbs' criticism by asking a question that is very relevant to the South African situation,

"Does the HUP produce or support racism, segregation, or isolationist churches? The plain answer is, it should not, but it may, and in some cases has done so."<sup>710</sup>

South Africa is a good example of this.<sup>711</sup>

Wagner admits that the HUP is a risk, and in a country with our kind of racial history, surely this is not the kind of risk that we want to take lightly. Wagner also admits freely that there are certain social disaster areas in today's world where the HUP should perhaps be violated. One such area is South Africa. "They might have to sacrifice

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(Footnote Continued)

example.

Goldsmith, Martin F.: "The Karo Batak" in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. p.44.

<sup>710</sup> Smith, Ebbie C.: Balanced Church Growth. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman, 1984, p.56.

<sup>711</sup> Apparently a few weeks after the HUP was discussed at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, it was said in South Africa that "Apartheid" was endorsed by Lausanne. See: Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.169.

growth temporarily in order to combat the racism of that country."<sup>712</sup>

If the HUP is to be used as a missiological tool, it will be imperative to heed the following. The homogeneous approach must be considered a strategy rather than a rule or a principle. In contrast to a principle, a strategy can be altered or set aside as situations demand. Secondly, the HU concept is not the ultimate strategy. The ultimate expression of the Kingdom of God is a classless, casteless society of brotherhood. Thirdly, the HU strategy is an ultra-sensitive tool, which must be thoughtfully applied. The application thereof must be such as would not lead to nor reinforce unethical and unbiblical attitudes. Fourthly, every church must be consciously open to all, both in membership and fellowship. The Church should never be satisfied, simply to reflect the divisions and distancing present in its social context.

Every Homogeneous Unity church must take active steps to broaden its fellowship in order to demonstrate visible unity and the variety of Christ's Church. This will mean forging with other and different churches creative relationships which express the reality of Christian love, brotherhood, and interdependence.<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>712</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: "Should the Church be a melting Pot?", in Christianity Today. 1978, p.10-16.

<sup>713</sup>Pasadena Consultation - Homogeneous Unit. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. 1978, pp.4-5.

Fifthly, while local churches may at least to some degree remain homogeneous as a result of "free association", a denomination should resist the temptation to move away from any specific ethnic grouping of peoples, and rather strive towards denominational heterogeneity. Sixthly, teach and work tirelessly to overcome unchristian and unbiblical prejudices and hatreds. This effort must be exerted both within congregations and between congregations. In denominations consisting of different homogeneous groupings heterogeneous facilities for theological training must exist. Lastly, let us never forget that

We are not winning people like ourselves to ourselves but sharing the good news that in Christ God has shattered the barriers that divide the human race and has created a new community. The new people of God has no analogy; it is a 'sociological impossibility' (Hoekendijk 1948:237) that has nevertheless become possible.<sup>714</sup>

That immense damage was done by the apartheid system is an understatement. How can one ever determine the degradation that this system of racial prejudice, exploitation and oppression had on the human dignity of blacks? Migratory labour forced the separation of families for months, with unmentionable social ills like adultery, homosexuality, illegitimate children, divorce etc. that followed. All of this, together with unequal economic and

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<sup>714</sup>Bosch, 1983, op. cit., p.239.

political opportunities,<sup>715</sup> had a very serious effect on the church. Various apartheid laws caused blacks to be treated as foreigners, second-class citizens in their own country. Whites enjoyed rights and privileges which they were denied.

Accommodating apartheid in the Church certainly compromised the AFM's witness and credibility in black society. But it had other far reaching implications as well. Chikane describes how some of the AFM in Africa's youth left the country after the 1976 upheavals and after, and who came back as ANC fighters.

I taught some of them in Sunday School (e.g. my brother Abie Chikane, M. Ranato, David Matsone and others). I knew them as committed Christians, and some were leaders of young people in the church. They were out and out against violence, basing their understanding on the traditional theological position of the church. But somehow, because of the repressive nature of the State, because of the violence meted against them and the resulting theological contradictions, the discontinuities in their system of faith as young Christians - somehow they became members of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe.<sup>716</sup>

Futhermore, evangelistic opportunities like the reaching of thousands of black domestic workers, who were living and working in white areas on Sundays were passed by because they were not welcome in a "white church". At the same time this unscriptural ideology caused almost

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<sup>715</sup>Groenewald, 1986, op. cit., pp.18-43.

<sup>716</sup>Chikane, op. cit., p.186.



irrevocable damage to the AFM's unity. It is little wonder that the majority of black pastors feel that the white AFM ought to fulfill a stronger prophetic role towards the Government.<sup>717</sup>

The black homelands were a direct consequence of the apartheid policy. The apartheid policy was based on the vision of the parallel coexistence of different national groups, with each ethnic group eventually having its own independent territory (homeland). A commonwealth of independent states in Southern Africa would then be established.

But, as Moller agrees, "This apartheid ideal, however, clashed with the realities of S.A. society..."<sup>718</sup> A number of factors made the implementation of this policy impossible. A large portion of urbanised blacks was totally detached from the areas of their origin and estranged from the so-called homelands into which the government wanted to place them. Their vast numbers, financial and other reasons, made a viable livelihood in the homelands impossible. Although some blacks moved from the cities to the homelands, the stream to the cities remained larger. Although the

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<sup>717</sup>Opinion poll taken amongst black pastors: 1983.

<sup>718</sup>Moller, 1988, op. cit., p.11.

homelands provided some sort of political base, something they were denied in the rest of South Africa, this was offset by what De Gruchy believes, "the fact that the system was not freely chosen by blacks".<sup>719</sup>

The biggest problems the church encountered in the homelands, were socio-economical. The fact that little work opportunities existed, especially for the men, forced them to become part of the system of migrant labour. This meant that most of the men left the homelands to come to work in South Africa, especially in the mines. The men were accommodated in compounds and after completion of their service contracts they returned to their homes. Logically, this separation from their families for months, had a detrimental influence on their social and family life, and gave birth to unmentionable social ills like homosexuality, adultery, illegitimate children, divorce etc. Certainly, to expect a man to work in one place and his family to live in another, amounts to a serious breach of basic human rights.

Paradoxically, despite these problems, the AFM in Africa probably gained numerically by this policy.<sup>720</sup> As was

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<sup>719</sup>De Gruchy, 1979, op. cit., p.80.

<sup>720</sup>Unfortunately, no viable comparison can really be made between the growth of the AFM in Africa, in South Africa, and in the homelands, because statistically the  
(Footnote Continued)

previously discussed, the homogeneous groupings made evangelism and church planting much easier.

There are also other reasons why the AFM grew well in the homelands, that are sociological. Robert L. Ramseyer maintains that at the present time there are at least three situations in which large populations can be assumed a priori to be responsive to the gospel.<sup>721</sup> These are:

- a) societies which are moving from a tribal or pretribal level of social organization to a more complex level of organization,
- b) those segments in complex societies that feel themselves to be denied equal access to the resources of that society,
- c) those portions of urban population which have recently migrated from the countryside.

Charles Arn puts it this way:

A well tested principle of Church Growth is that 'unchurched people are most responsive to a change in life style... during periods of transition'. These periods of transition might be times when an individual or a people have their normal behaviour patterns disrupted by some <sup>722</sup>unusual event which requires an unfamiliar response.

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(Footnote Continued)

homelands are not separated from the other black districts. Most homelands are included in existing black districts in South Africa.

<sup>721</sup>Ramseyer, op. cit., p.68.

<sup>722</sup>Arn, W. Charles: "Receptivity-Rating Scale" in Church Growth America, Summer 1978, p.3.

The above three conditions are clearly descriptive of the blacks' situation in the homelands. With thousands of black farmworkers, who hardly ever had the opportunity of attending church, migrating to the homelands, it offers a tremendous challenge to the church to reach them with the gospel.

One involuntarily wonders how it is possible that a church so committed to the missionary task can also be supportive of such an inhuman social and political system. Jaap Durand's answer, when the same question is asked about the NGK, is perfectly true of the AFM:

The answer to this riddle is usually found in the fact that the missionary vision of the Dutch Reformed Church was so closely linked to the notion of the calling of the Afrikaner amongst the peoples of South Africa that the two things (mission and apartheid) became compatible.<sup>723</sup>

Although the AFM denounced apartheid in 1985,<sup>724</sup> it has simply not done enough to eradicate it in the church. Evaluating the AFM's stance on apartheid reveals that, firstly, the history of the AFM illustrates the important role that culture plays in a churches' hermeneutics. We all read the Bible from within a specific historical and social

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<sup>723</sup> Durand, Jaap: "Afrikaner piety and dissent", in Resistance and Hope (ed. De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio). Cape Town: David Philip, 1985, p.49.

<sup>724</sup> Concept declaration of intention. Available at the AFM headquarters, Lyndhurst.

context and then project our own convictions back into the Bible. Secondly, the AFM has not yet dealt in depth with the theological implication of apartheid. Their reluctance to declare it a heresy and to boldly address the government is proof of that. Thirdly, the AFM (like most Afrikaans churches), clearly, never took the ethic of "do to others what you would have them do to you (Mat.7:12)", seriously enough. Undoubtedly, has this ethic socio-economical and political dimensions. Fourthly, the social hiatus between white members and black members of the AFM is so big that it is not surprising that the adverse socio-economic conditions of their black brothers and sisters never addressed the white peoples' social conscience. Fifthly, the fact that the AFM in Africa remained loyal and loving towards the white AFM in spite of this policy, serves as a good example of their Christian patience and tolerance.

#### **Urbanization:**

In South Africa the 19th century was characterised by large shifts in population which led to the present provincial division and the so-called Black states. By comparison the 20th century has been characterised by large population concentrations in and around the cities, the

result of economic changes caused by an industrial, mining and agricultural revolution.<sup>725</sup> De Gruchy is convinced that,

The rapid growth of black urbanization, stimulated by migratory labor and post-war industrialization, had radically altered the socio-cultural existence of the black community since early in the twentieth century.<sup>726</sup>

As a result, much of the former tribal cohesion was fragmented and many personal and social problems arose without traditional resources available to handle them.

Therefor, Ramseyer's argument that people are more responsive to the gospel in certain situations, like, "those portion of urban population which have recently migrated from the countryside", is applicable.<sup>727</sup> In this sense the urbanization of blacks facilitated the growth of the AFM in Africa.

The patterns of population distribution are not the same for the Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians in South-Africa. Graph 11 illustrates the rural and urban distribution patterns in 1980.<sup>728</sup> In contrast with the other

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<sup>725</sup>Swart, C.F.: "Urbanisation - catalyst for socio-economic and political change", in Change in South Africa (ed. Van Vuuren, Wiehahn, Lombard, Rhoodie). Pretoria: Butterworths, 1983, p.98.

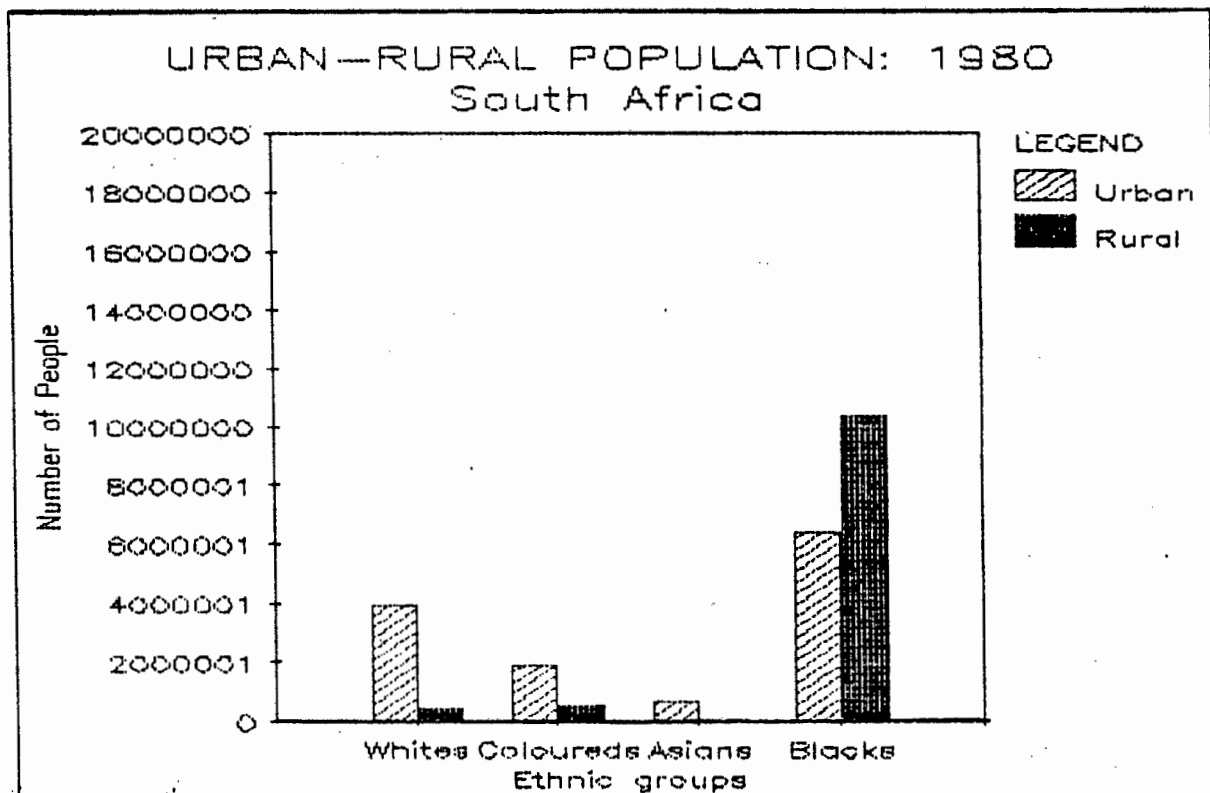
<sup>726</sup>De Gruchy, 1979, op. cit., p.46.

<sup>727</sup>See p.272 The phenomenal growth of the African Indigenous Churches in urban areas, prove this sociological observation to be true.

<sup>728</sup>Swart, op. cit., p.102.

main population groups, Blacks were predominantly rural in 1980 .

GRAPH 11:



The urban-rural distribution pattern was constituted as follows: Whites - 4,002,000 urbanized, 526,100 rural; 743,820 urbanized, 77,500 rural; Blacks - 6,479,660 urbanized, 10,444,100 rural.

Kritzinger makes the observation that almost one out of three rural blacks does not belong to any church yet,

whereas with the urban blacks it is only one out of every six that do not belong to a church.<sup>729</sup> He also says,

n Verdere opvallende verskynsel is dat alle kerkgenootskappe in die RSA - met die uitsondering van die Ned Geref Kerk in Afrika en die Apost Geloofsending - persentasiegewys n sterker aanhang in die stad het as daarbuite.<sup>730</sup>

Clearly, the AFM in Africa is not making use of the opportunity to reach a "responsive" segment of society. The AFM in Africa will urgently have to develop a new urban strategy of mission in order to fulfill their responsibility in this respect. Willie Esterhuyse, professor in philosophy at Stellenbosch University calculates that by the year 2000, ten million urban blacks will live and work in and around all of the present metropolitan areas.<sup>731</sup> Others believe this could be as high as approximately 27 million.<sup>732</sup> There is no doubt that the society of the future will be an urban society.

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<sup>729</sup>Kritzinger, op. cit., p.13.

<sup>730</sup>Ibid.

<sup>731</sup>Esterhuyse, Willie P.: Swart Verstedeliking. Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studies, Studiestuk no.223, 1986, p.7.

<sup>732</sup>Kritzinger, J.J., P.G.J. Meiring & W.A. Saayman: You will Be My Witnesses. Pretoria: NGKB, 1984, p.132.



## INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS.

### The Missions Policy of the AFM:

An almost unwritten policy was followed in regard to the appointment of a Mission's Superintendent. Except for Gschwend, all previous Superintendents were also members of the white Executive Council. Only P.L. Le Roux and Gschwend were missionaries before becoming the Superintendent of Missions. Needless to say that they were the most successful. All the other Superintendents had little or no experience of missions, did not speak or understand any black language, and had little working knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of the black people. Van Rensburg admitted, "...verdra my waar ek onervare is..."<sup>733</sup> Although they may have been sincere in their efforts, most of them were, to say the least, ill-equipped to lead in this very important section of the AFM. But taking their cultural and historical backgrounds into consideration it is little wonder that from the start this position was limited only to white persons.<sup>734</sup>

There is no doubt that the white missionaries fulfilled a significant role in the growth of the AFM in Africa. The dedication with which the majority fulfilled their calling

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<sup>733</sup>Van Rensburg, M.J.: The Comforter, Feb. 1950, p.14.

<sup>734</sup>Minutes of the Executive Council, 1909, p.39.

in the midst of the most adverse circumstances is admirable. Constant lack of finances, vast distances and huge districts, far too big for one missionary to supervise, did not prohibit these pioneers from giving themselves fully in this work. Sometimes their only means of transport was to walk.

Hij vertelde ook, hoe dat hij soms van 100 tot 120 mijl te voet moest afleggen, met slechts een donkie om zijn beddegoed te dragen.<sup>735</sup>

In order to have something to eat missionary Vermeulen had to exchange some of his clothes for mealie-meal.<sup>736</sup> Taking into consideration their limited resources as far as missiologial training and finances were concerned they did an admirable job of structuring the AFM in Africa.

Conversely there are also negative observations about the white missionaries. With the big emphasis on the role of the white missionary, especially as far as leadership and administration was concerned, local leadership never developed as it ought to have. Dr. J.H. Bavinck agrees, saying, the "great danger connected with the continued oversight of the missionary is that the young church is artificially kept immature".<sup>737</sup> Bavinck is convinced that,

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<sup>735</sup> Trooster, May 1925, p.6.

<sup>736</sup> Ibid., August 1933, p.21.

<sup>737</sup> Bavinck, J.H.: An Introduction to the Science of Missions. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960, p.197.

the very presence of a missionary, and the faithfulness of his care, no matter how well intended, may result in impeding the growth of a young church.<sup>738</sup>

Another danger is directly related to the missionary himself. Says Bavinck, "He is readily inclined to think of himself as indispensable and to regard the young church as immature."<sup>739</sup> To be let alone is the only way a church can learn responsibility.

No wonder that a polemic burst forth around the person of the missionary. This reached a fresh climax through the so-called moratorium debate, when one Black church leader after another quite bluntly stressed the fact that the missionary was often viewed as an obstacle to the growth and the evolvement of a truly indigenous leadership in the young church.<sup>740</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid.

<sup>740</sup> At a missionary conference held in Bangkok in late 1972 and early 1973, some delegates (especially from Africa) asked for a moratorium on all mission work. Verkuyl is convinced that although this term connotes the idea of a complete cessation of relationships, they really meant that churches in Africa should temporarily suspend relation with those in Europe and America in order to set their own house in order and then begin anew to built different patterns of relationship. For an overview of this debate, see: Verkuyl, J.: Contemporary Missiology - an introduction. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, pp.334-340.

Norman Thomas is convinced that the role of missionaries in evangelization and church growth in Africa has been overrated. Thomas quotes Lamin Sanneh of the Gambia and Harvard University, who writes,

If we assess the effectiveness of Western missions by statistical standards of horizontal spread, they would fail abysmally. The most spectacular gains by Christianity occurred by other hands, or after the formal withdrawal of missionaries.<sup>741</sup>

It is a pity that in regard to the training of the AFM's missionaries, the official missions' policy was not followed more closely. The fact that they had no formal missiological training prevented them from becoming as effective as they could have been. Even if they would have adhered to the recommended policy of doing their first year under the supervision of an experienced missionary, as well as learn the local black language, it would have helped.<sup>742</sup> The policy of the calling of white missionaries by white district councils that was followed in the later years, also did not always have a positive affect. Although the blacks and the Mission Superintendent (title later changed to Director of Missions) were consulted, the white District Council had the final say because they would finance his

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<sup>741</sup>Thomas, Norman E.: "Evangelization and Church Growth: The Case of Africa", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Vol.11, no.4, Oct.1987, p.168.

<sup>742</sup>Minutes of the Workers Council, 5/4/1948, Available at AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

salary. The result of this was that persons would become missionaries without them being really suitable, or the blacks necessarily wanting that person to be their missionary.

The 1983 opinion poll amongst pastors of the AFM in Africa revealed the following perceptions of their white overseers (now called field advisors).<sup>743</sup> Firstly, pastors feel that the missionaries do not understand their problems in general. Secondly, only the exceptional missionary could speak their language. Thirdly, the majority felt that the missionaries did not understand their culture at all. Fourthly, a shocking fact is that only 60% felt that their white overseer really loved black people, while 30% said the missionary loved them only a little. 10% outrightly stated that their field advisors did not love black people at all. Fifthly, although 52% of the pastors felt that they could not continue the work effectively without the missionaries, 27% felt that they could and 21% were unsure. One wonders whether their dependence was on the missionary skills or the monthly financial subsidy. Probably it is the last.

That unsuitable whites sometimes became missionaries are further illustrated by an incident Frank Chikane wrote

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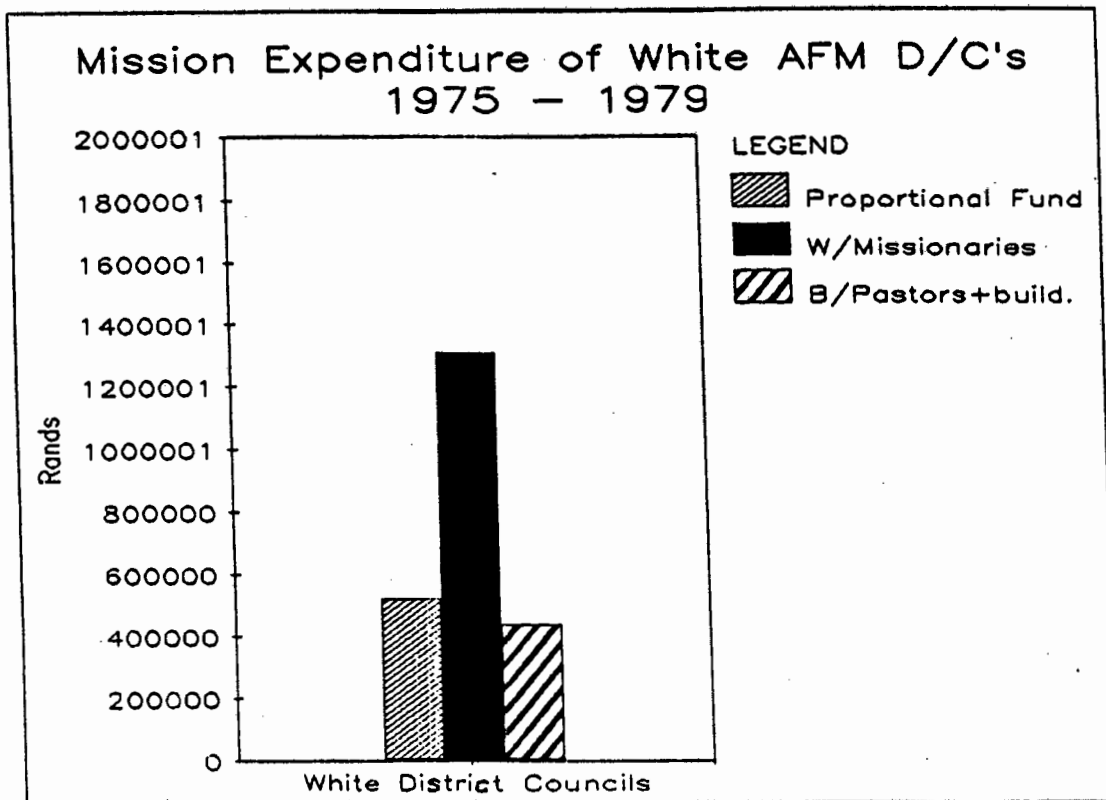
<sup>743</sup> See Appendix 2, section 3.

the white district missionary chairperson. On their arrival at his house in Krugersdorp they were told to use the back door.

At the back door we were shown a garage where we were to meet the pastor. Not in his house. Not for blacks. I could not understand why Christians behaved like this. Now I understand.<sup>744</sup>

Bavinck rightly states that "our approach ought to be of such a nature that those who bear the gospel do not stand in its way but appear rather as living introductions to the message."<sup>745</sup>

GRAPH 12:



<sup>744</sup> Chikane, 1988, op. cit., p.45.  
Random examples of this type of behaviour by white missionaries could be cited.

<sup>745</sup> Bavinck, 1960, op. cit., p.89.

Graph 12, representing a random study of the five year period 1975 - 1979, clearly illustrates the big financial burden that the white missionaries represented.<sup>746</sup>

The proportional fund is statutory money that the white district councils were obliged to pay to the Mission Department.<sup>747</sup> The middle column represents money spent on white missionaries' salaries, housing and traveling expenses. The third column represents the money districts spent on the subsidising black pastors salaries where necessary, and building projects (churches etc.). More than R1,3 million was spent on white missionaries over that period, while only R0,5 million was spent on the proportional fund and only R0,4 million on black pastors and building projects combined. This does not mean that it was a mistake in the missions policy of the AFM to employ white missionaries. There was a time when that kind of expenditure was money well spent. Stephen Neill believes that,

The greatest mistake of all made by the missionaries has been that in many cases they stayed on too long and monopolized positions of authority and responsibility in the church....a missionary's job must be to work himself out of a job.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>746</sup>Research project in 1980. Information gained from the financial statements of the different white district councils. Available at the AFM headquarters, Lyndhurst.

<sup>747</sup>They would use it for administration purposes, subsidising of small districts, projects in other countries.

<sup>748</sup>Neill, Stephen: Call to Missions. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970, p.45.

If the AFM's missionaries were better trained and equipped, they would have "worked themselves out of a job" a long time ago.

David Bosch joins Herbert C. Jackson in pleading not only for a 'theology of mission', but for a 'missionary theology'.<sup>749</sup> One agrees with Bosch that such a theology has never been developed in any stage of the Church's history, and is much needed.

One of the most significant factors contributing to the growth and rapid spread of the AFM in Africa was definitely the big emphasis that was put on evangelism and church planting right from their birth. Charles Conn remarks, "One of the chief reasons for the existence of the Pentecostal Movement is evangelism"<sup>750</sup> Their literal interpretation of Scripture and task-orientated approach to mission, led them to believe that aggressive evangelism was scriptural and they had to respond accordingly. This is clearly demonstrated in

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<sup>749</sup> Bosch, David J.: Witness to the World. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985, p.25. See also:

: "Missionary Theology", in Journal of Theology for Southern Africa. No.49, Dec. 1984, pp.14-37.

<sup>750</sup> Conn, Charles W.: Pillars of Pentecost. Cleveland, Tenn.: Pathway Press., 1956, p.28.



their mission policy. Church members were expected to witness to their fellows, while missionaries were strongly encouraged to "...extend and establish the work in their Districts and such adjoining areas as may be unevangelized...".<sup>751</sup> Also,

That it shall be the policy of the Overseers to raise up within their Districts a striking force of Evangelists and Local Preachers, who shall be zealous for the extension of the work.<sup>752</sup>

More will be said about the AFM in Africa's evangelistic methodology under the heading of local institutional factors. The AFM in Africa's theological understanding of evangelism is perfectly in line with that of Pentecostals worldwide.

The historical self-image of the major Pentecostal church bodies is that they were raised up to be an instrument of evangelism in the world.<sup>753</sup> For Pentecostals evangelism involves much more than simply proclaiming the gospel.

Evangelistic proclamation is not an end in itself but a means to an end - the persuasion of sinners to accept Christ as Lord and to follow him as responsible, reproducing members of a local church. Pentecostal

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<sup>751</sup> Handbook for the Native Section, 1946, p.15, AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid.

<sup>753</sup> Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. (ed. Stanley M. Burgess & Gary B. McGee), Grand Rapids: Regency, 1988, p.284.

evangelism would reject the liberal tenets of universalism that say the work of evangelism is simply to inform people that they are already saved. Neither do Pentecostals believe that proclaiming only for the sake of giving objective information is sufficient.<sup>754</sup>

Pentecostal evangelism therefore calls for a confrontation; it is the conveyance of truth-as-encounter. Pentecostals motivation for evangelism centers around the following.<sup>755</sup> Firstly, they have understood an obedience to evangelize as one of the primary steps of obedience in Christian discipleship. Secondly, it has been crystal clear in the theology of Pentecostal evangelism that humankind is lost and is under the judgement of eternal punishment unless reached with the good news of the gospel. Thirdly, their "eschatological urgency", that is, the imminent return of Christ and the end of all things.

Three approaches to evangelism have been debated in recent times, namely, presence evangelism, which assumes that by our love and Christian witness and lifestyle, people will want to become Christians too.<sup>756</sup> Secondly, proclamation evangelism, saying, anyone who faithfully proclaims the message is evangelizing, whether conversion

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<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid., pp.285-286.

<sup>756</sup> Warren Max: "Presence and Proclamation" in The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents 1964-1976 (ed. McGavran). Pasadena: Wm. Carey Library, 1977, pp189-204.

follows or not.<sup>757</sup> Thirdly, the Church Growth Movement add to presence and proclamation, persuasion. Evangelism is to persuade people to become Christians.<sup>758</sup>

John Stott correctly argues that evangelism should not be described in terms of its objects or results, but rather of its contents.<sup>759</sup> Stott identifies the contents as the New Testament kerygma, which consists of at least the following elements: the gospel events, the gospel witnesses, the gospel affirmations, the gospel promises, and the gospel demands.<sup>760</sup> Stott is adamant that evangelism is more than verbal proclamation and that the preaching of the word should be accompanied by signs of the approaching Kingdom and a new life in obedience and community.

Melvin Hodges addresses a regular concern of those outside the Pentecostal Movement, saying:

There are those who contend that the Pentecostals' view of Christian mission is too narrow, and that emphasis on evangelism and personal conversion leaves much to be desired in the area of men's physical and

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<sup>757</sup> One of the best known proponents of this is James I. Packer. Packer, J.I.: Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. London: Inter-varsity, 1961.

<sup>758</sup> Wagner, C. Peter: Frontiers in Missionary Strategy. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971, pp.128-129.

<sup>759</sup> Stott, John: Christian Mission in the Modern World. London: Falcon, 1975, pp.37-40.

<sup>760</sup> Ibid., pp.44-54.

economic needs. To this, Pentecostals answer: Let us put first things first!<sup>761</sup>

He then conveys the traditional Pentecostal view that man's heart must first be changed by the gospel, before the periphery can be corrected. Although the AFM would certainly endorse this view, their early mission's policy underlined the responsibility of the missionaries not only to minister to the spiritual needs of the people but also to help in their social upliftment.

8. Rigt op model kralen bij alle staties of gevestigde standplaatsen of buiten staties, maakt ook vruchten en groente tuinen alsmede boom plantaties, alsook verbeteringen van huizen en huisraad. Moedig de bekeerden aan dit na te doen.<sup>762</sup>

Although there is certainly truth in the accusation that Pentecostals neglect social responsibilities, that does not represent the whole picture. Hollenweger agrees that, "The belief and practice of the Pentecostal movement provides help for people who live on the fringes of society".<sup>763</sup> Russell P. Spittler states,

An overlooked chapter in the history of the twentieth century relates to socially ameliorative efforts of early Pentecostal leaders. Often in conjunction with downtown missions or churches, and sometimes involving homes or farms beyond city limits, these pioneer Pentecostals offered free food, shelter for unwed

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<sup>761</sup>Hodges, Melvin L.: "A Pentecostal's View of Mission Strategy" in Azusa Street and Beyond. South Plainfield, NJ.: Bridge Pub., 1986, p.87.

<sup>762</sup>Comforter, 1919, p.4, point 8.

<sup>763</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.457.

mothers, "faith homes" for invalids and the ill, and carried out other activities that would be labelled "social action" today. But in these cases the programs were local and instrumental: they were a means to evangelism, not at all the end result of socially conceived mission agendas.<sup>764</sup>

Pentecostals worldwide were never hesitant to reach out to the poor, even when some of the "respectable" mainline churches would refrain from doing so. The role that the AFM fulfilled during the "Poor-White" problem is a good example.<sup>765</sup>

...the working class, the disinherited masses, the migrant farmers, the squatters on the fringes of the cities, the poor and oppressed.....These are the people, generally speaking, that you find in the Pentecostal churches in Latin America.<sup>766</sup>

Wagner notes also that the social change brought about by Pentecostals in Latin America, although "indirect" in nature, is significant.<sup>767</sup>

Though it might be true that the AFM brought about social change in an "indirect" way amongst the Blacks in South Africa, the situation leaves much to be desired. Surely strenuous evangelisation has resulted in a

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<sup>764</sup>Spittler, Russell P.: "Implicit Values in Pentecostal Missions" in Missiology, No.4, Oct. 1988, p.418.

<sup>765</sup>Burger, op. cit., p.148.

<sup>766</sup>Wagner, C. Peter: Spiritual Power and Church Growth. Altamonte Springs, FL.: Strang, 1986, p.65. See also: Anderson, op. cit., p.122.

<sup>767</sup>Wagner, 1974, op. cit., p.138.

sociocultural lift that accompanies redemption, but there is a limit to that. Moller believes that, "Through the action of the gospel a person is liberated from all that brings socio-economic distress".<sup>768</sup> Clearly, this is a gross oversimplification. Not all socio-economic problems are caused by man's sinful state. What about unjust political systems, like apartheid in South Africa, guaranteeing certain privileges for Whites only?. This also will have to be addressed and corrected. More attention will have to be given on the cultural mandate by the AFM if they wish to fulfill their mission according to the holistic nature of the message of the Kingdom of God.

The Church Growth Movement holds that it is theologically and biblically defensible to make a distinction between the evangelistic and cultural mandate. The Movement also argues that the evangelistic mandate maintains priority over the cultural mandate if the revealed will of God is properly understood.<sup>769</sup> Although they can be differentiated, one from the other, they hold the position that the two mandates should not be polarized. The one must not be set against the other, since both are part of the working out of the Kingdom of God in our day.

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<sup>768</sup> Moller, 1988, op. cit., p.47.

<sup>769</sup> Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.101.

Wagner makes a statement that might surprise many of the critics of the Church Growth Movement:

While in theory the evangelistic mandate has the long range priority, in some concrete situations faithfulness to God and His Kingdom demands that the cultural mandate take priority.<sup>770</sup>

The term he prefers in describing a concrete situation where the cultural mandate may take priority, is "social disaster area". McGavran makes allowance for the social disaster area when he says,

Under some circumstances, to be sure, and for a limited time, Christianizing some aspect of the social order may legitimately be assigned a higher priority<sup>771</sup> and receive greater attention than evangelism.

Wagner defines two types of social disaster areas, namely

- a) social service disaster areas, for example famine, and
- b) social action disaster areas. Social action is the kind of social ministry geared toward changing social structures.

Logically, in a social service disaster situation the cultural mandate must take priority - such as in a famine. People must be fed and lives be saved. Dead people cannot hear the gospel anyway, so what good is prioritizing the evangelistic mandate?

Social action disaster areas are somewhat more complex. Do we wait for matters of injustice, oppression, racism,

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<sup>770</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>771</sup> McGavran, 1980, op. cit., p. 25.

unemployment, exploitation, war, consumerism and human rights to be resolved in a way congruous with the Kingdom of God before we vigorously implement the evangelistic mandate? There is little doubt that South Africa is a legitimate social action disaster area, therefore the former question is very certainly applicable to us. McGavran makes allowances for the prioritization of the cultural mandate, but only for a "limited time". The problem with this is that it usually takes more than a limited time to bring about socio-political liberation, and furthermore, not all Christians will agree to what the ideal society should look like before we can begin evangelizing again. Johannes Verkuyl is convinced that McGavran's method of setting priorities is one-sided and unbiblical.<sup>772</sup>

For John Stott, the word 'mission' "...includes evangelism and social responsibility, since both are authentic expressions of love which longs to serve man in his need"<sup>773</sup> Wagner, who also holds this view, calls it "holistic mission". Clearly not everyone agrees that evangelism and service should be separated as two distinct parts of mission. Bosch prefers to speak of evangelism as an essential "dimension" rather than speaking of it as a

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<sup>772</sup>Verkuyl, op. cit., p.192.

<sup>773</sup>Stott, op. cit., p.35.



"component" or "segment" or "part" of mission.<sup>774</sup> Bosch sees an inherent danger in Stott and Wagner's view that mission consists of two separately identifiable segments, evangelism and social involvement. Bosch believes this definition to be

susceptible to grave misunderstanding and abuse. The moment you define mission in this way, either one or both of two things may happen: a) You may give primacy to either evangelism or social action, which in the course of time may lead to b) divorcing the one from the other. This is indeed happening, among both evangelicals and ecumenicals.<sup>775</sup>

Bosch would rather prefer that evangelism be regarded as an essential dimension of the wider concept of mission, as the "very heart or core" of mission, which would absolve the need either to defend our particular priority constantly or to try to achieve a neat balance between evangelism and social action. He believes that,

...to contrast evangelism with social action is in itself misleading, as it tends to suggest that evangelism a priori lacks a social dimension and social action an evangelistic dimension.<sup>776</sup>

Bosch calls this "holistic evangelism".<sup>777</sup> In accordance with our position, Ronald Sider agrees with the "holistic evangelism" group that it is wrong to prioritize, but

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<sup>774</sup> Bosch, David J.: "Evangelism - An Holistic Approach" in Journal of Theology for Southern Africa. No.36, Sept.1981, p.48.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

<sup>776</sup> Ibid.

<sup>777</sup> Agreeing with Bosch are people like: Alfred Krass, Rene Padilla, Orlando Costas, Harvey Conn and Carl F. Henry.

differs from them in admitting that it is legitimate to recognize evangelism and social action as "quite distinct aspects of the total mission of the church".<sup>778</sup>

Living in such a torn and divided community such as South Africa makes one understand and share Bosch's fear. But whether just a change of definition will result in balanced "holistic" ministry is debatable. In the same way that Wagner's "holistic mission" is susceptible to abuse, so is Bosch's "holistic evangelism".

Firstly, until a total change in attitude has occurred and church leaders realise that it is not only a matter of the one or the other, but a question of being faithful to the whole gospel of Jesus Christ at the same time, they will always tend to play evangelism off against social action. What we need is a comprehensive Kingdom approach.

Missionary work, it is stressed, is not only a matter of preaching the gospel or building up the church, nor of the political, social and economic engagement of Christians, but of all these things combined.<sup>779</sup>

Secondly, in order for the church to develop an holistic approach to evangelism, the importance of recognizing the diversity of spiritual gifts (Rom.12; 1Cor.12; Eph.4;

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<sup>778</sup>Sider, Ronald J.: Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice. Bramcote, Notts, UK: Grove Books, 1977, p.17.

<sup>779</sup>Kritzinger, J.J., P.G.J. Meiring, W.A. Saayman: You Will Be My Witnesses. Pretoria: NGKB, 1984, p.38.

1Pet.2) within the "body of Christ" (the church), will have to re-emerge. Glasser argues that the sheer diversity of the New testament gifts,

...cannot but mean that God does not force his people or their congregations to adopt any one 'authorized' agenda. Spiritual gifts make possible a congregation's obedience to both the cultural and the redemptive mandates. But in the full exercise of the gifts Christians have individually received, there will always be those involved in the apostolate, serving as God's envoys to the non-Christian world. There will always be others involved in the prophetic calling, reminding churches and Christians of their societal responsibilities. And there will always be those whose concerns are pastoral, assisting local congregations in their worship, nurture, study, and mutual helpfulness (1Cor.12:28-31).<sup>780</sup>

This means that one cannot establish biblically the thesis that evangelism should be the priority of all Christians, although all are under obligation to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

Certainly one can expect in the context of South Africa that the "gifts" of the Spirit pertaining to social action will come boldly to the fore, and where they don't, like any underdeveloped gift they must be developed and trained to fulfill wholesome Kingdom mission. Not for one moment should those gifted for social service/action hesitate in serving the social needs of society, or if needed to boldly unmask ungodly, unbiblical political practices and ideologies. But

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<sup>780</sup>Glasser, Arthur F.: "The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology since World War 2" in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Jan.1985, p.12.

at the same time let those gifted for evangelism, fervently proclaim with compassion the gospel to Africa's millions.

Although the need for theological training was voiced as early as 1920, and regularly stated as part of missions policy,<sup>781</sup> the first official training centre was only started in 1951. In between the regional schools of Letwaba and others helped to fill the need, but they were far from adequate. Certainly the lack of training had a dampening effect on both the quantitative and qualitative growth of the AFM in Africa. Without being simplistic, this must have been one of the biggest contributing factors to the many heresies that developed in the AFM in Africa, with subsequent splits and eventually forming of Independent groups.

The lack of training naturally also affected the development of leadership among black pastors. Regular theological training since 1951 rectified much of the above. However, an opinion poll taken in 1983 amongst pastors revealed some startling facts. 57% felt that their training was insufficient and 92% also expressed their need for on-going theological training especially in the practical areas of ministry, for example, counseling.

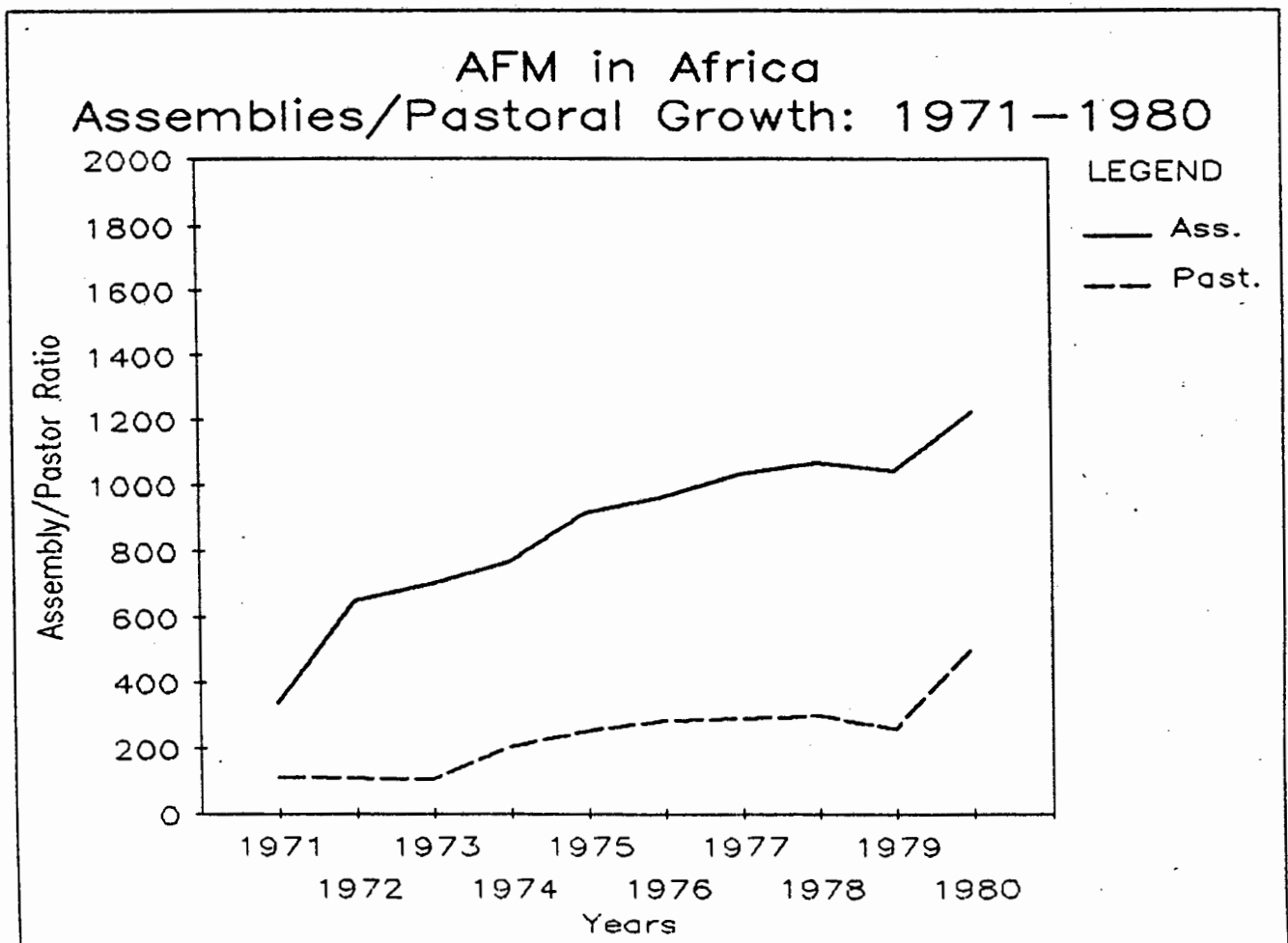
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<sup>781</sup>Comforter, "Onze Naturelle Gedraglijn", March 1919, point 18.

on-going theological training especially in the practical areas of ministry, for example, counseling.

One of the crises of Africa is a lack of trained leadership. The rapid growth and development of the church is one of the major contributing factors to this dire need. In many areas of Africa today there is a spirit of revival and expectancy such as has never been seen before. In fact, the church is growing faster than leaders can be trained. Graph 13, which shows the relation between the growth of the assemblies and the full-time worker force, clearly proves that this is also the case within the AFM in Africa.

GRAPH 13:



church. At the same time many who are already serving the church as local pastors or elders have had almost no training for their work. Many churches have no suitable leader at all. This can be a very dangerous situation and a serious threat to the quality of Christianity.

We all realise that there are no substitutes for dynamic, positive, inspiring leadership. Wagner writes:

Vital sign number one of a healthy, growing church is a pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership <sup>782</sup> has been used to catalyse the entire church for growth.

David Hesselgrave boldly states,

No organization can be stronger than its leadership. Therefore, to think, pray, work, and plan with a view to raising up spiritual leadership <sup>783</sup> for the organizing church should be of first priority.

If we want to see a strong, healthy church in Africa, there is no doubt that the training and development of strong leaders is an imperative. We dare not only rejoice in the many church plantings and successful quantitative growth and neglect this vital and much needed ingredient of leadership training and development.

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<sup>782</sup>Wagner, 1976, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>783</sup>Hesselgrave, David J.: Planting Churches Cross-Culturally. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980, p.349.

There are effective ways of developing leadership. One such very successful method that has been used extensively all over Latin-America and in Africa, is called Theological Education by Extention (T.E.E.). During the years 1962 to 1967 Ross Kinsler, James Emery and Ralph Winter experimented very successfully with T.E.E. in Guatemala. Soon the idea caught on of training those who are already in the ministry and training them in their very own communities rather than requiring them to travel long distances and live in an expensive foreign residential institution.<sup>784</sup> Fred Holland's book on T.E.E. is an excellent manual on the basics of T.E.E.<sup>785</sup>

There are at least three levels at which leadership training should be directed:

- a) On the decision making/executive level;
- b) On the pastoral level;
- c) On the lay leadership level.

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<sup>784</sup>Gerber, Vergil: Discipling Through Theological Training by Extension. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980, p. 9.

<sup>785</sup>Holland, Fred: Teaching Through T.E.E., Kisumu: Evangel, 1975.  
See also the latest studies on T.E.E.:  
Kinsler, F. Ross (ed.): Ministry by the People. New York: Orbis Books, 1983.  
Youngblood, Robert L.: Cyprus: TEE come of age. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984.

Langerman's statistics, that between 1908 and 1936 only 67 fulltime pastors were appointed, but that 332 laity (both men and women) were certified for ministerial service, underlines the significant role that the laity played in the growth and development of the AFM.<sup>786</sup> From the missions policy it becomes clear that the laity was taken seriously, especially in the early days. Local preachers were actively used in evangelistic programs and missionaries were encouraged to "...maak elk lidmaat een actieve werker."<sup>787</sup> Sadly, Langerman also observed that in later decades a steady decline in the participation of laity occurred.<sup>788</sup> The black church followed the same pattern as the white church, although to a lesser degree. There is no doubt that the laity in the AFM in Africa will have to be taken seriously again.

Evaluating Pentecostal growth over the past eighty years, Assemblies of God professor, Gary McGee believes that,

The third factor prompting growth during the past eighty years has been the leveling influence of Pentecostalism. The minimizing of the clergy/laity barrier grew from the belief that the Pentecostal baptism equips every believer for Christian

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<sup>786</sup>Langerman, op. cit., p.103.

<sup>787</sup>Comforter: "Voorschriften aan onze zendelingen", 1919, point 4b.

<sup>788</sup>Langerman, op. cit., p.102.



witness.<sup>789</sup>

Hendrik Kraemer led the way earlier this century in calling for a theology of the laity to undergird the widespread renewed interest in the laity. Only when the church recognizes "the laity's essential place and responsible partnership in the church's vocation", he wrote, will a theology of the laity have meaning. The view of the laity's role all too common today, which allows laymen to be appealed to as a sort of auxilliary army for times of special but temporary need, is not a truly biblical view.<sup>790</sup>

Eddie Gibbs underlines the need for trained lay-leadership when he says,

When one considers the totality and variety of the pastoral care, the teaching, the evangelism and the administration needed within a fellowship, it is improbable that any one man - no matter how creative a thinker or dynamic a leader - can cope with the total spectrum. The leadership base must be extended to include others who are appropriately gifted and show leadership potential.<sup>791</sup>

Spiritual gifts must also be mentioned as a great contributor in restoring the ministry of the laity. God has gifted every church and every Christian with the necessary

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<sup>789</sup> McGee, Gary B.: "The Azusa Street Revival and Twentieth-Century Missions", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Fort Lee, New Jersey, April 1988, p.60.

<sup>790</sup> Kraemer, Hendrik: A Theology of the Laity. Westminster. 1958, p.14, 119

<sup>791</sup> Gibbs, op. cit., p.360.

spiritual gifts to enable the building of the body of Christ. The biblical passages such as Ephesians 4:7-16, Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:1-14,40, and 1 Peter 4:7-11 stress this dimension very strongly. The spiritual gifts principle fits the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer.

### **The Indigeneity of the AFM in Africa:**

Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society and Rufus Anderson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions both advocated in the 1850's what would today be called indigenous church principles.<sup>792</sup> They stressed that the ideals of a young church ought to be, "self-support, self-government, self-propagation". For Germans like Gustav Warneck, it was a natural transition from this to the concept of "independent church".<sup>793</sup>

Missionary work must be done in such a way that new converts are gradually led towards independence - the missionary must work with a view to withdrawing the mission. The euthanasia of mission is the ultimate objective.<sup>794</sup>

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<sup>792</sup> McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.336.

<sup>793</sup> For more on Warneck's "Missionslehre", see: Hoekendijk, J.C.: Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingswetenschap. Amsterdam, pp.84-87; 90-95.

<sup>794</sup> Kritzinger, Meiring, Saayman. op. cit., p.157.

Unfortunately, as I have already pointed out, in practice real independence is hardly ever attained because of the high standards put forth by the sending church.

According to McGavran, if indigenous church principles are properly understood, "...they have great value for the propagation of the Gospel and should be taken seriously by all students of church growth".<sup>795</sup> He then continues by giving "Eight reasons why indigenous churches grow better than others".<sup>796</sup> Although McGavran believes that indigenous church principles are good, he also emphatically states that it is a serious oversimplification to imagine that they are the only factor or even the chief factor in growth or nongrowth.<sup>797</sup>

Advocate of the indigenous church, Melvin Hodges states, "The genius of the Pentecostal movement is uniquely suited to the indigenous church method."<sup>798</sup> Russell Spittler rightly asks the question,

May it not be argued that the indigeneous [sic] principle, which a lot of Pentecostals arguably were

<sup>795</sup> McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.335. For his view on "Indigenous church principles and growing churches", see pp.335-353.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid., pp.340 - 344.

<sup>797</sup> Ibid., p.345.

<sup>798</sup> Hodges, Melvin L.: The Indigenous Church. Springfield, Miss.: Gospel Pub. House, 1953, p.132.

carrying out before they knew what the word meant, in part springs from the high value placed on spontaneity?<sup>799</sup>

Spittler's conclusion is that it is likely that people who value the spontaneity of the Spirit in their own personal religious experience would want to allow that same freedom to the peoples to whom they minister.

In the light of the importance of indigeneity, let us evaluate the indigeneity of the AFM in Africa. In this regard the "Indigeneity Scales", developed by Ebbie Smith, are very helpfull.<sup>800</sup> The indigeneity scales used are: self-adapting to local culture; self-functioning; self-supporting; self-determining; self-giving; and self-propagating. The approach of these scales is that churches are neither fully indigenous nor non-indigenous.

The scales of indigeneity are composed of five questions related to each of the six categories of indigeneity.<sup>801</sup> The Church (in this case AFM in Africa) is rated from one to five on each question. A high score is an indication of indigeneity. After the church is rated on each question within a category, the surveyor adds the figures

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<sup>799</sup>Spittler, op. cit., p.416.

<sup>800</sup>Smith, Ebbie. op. cit., pp.41 - 53.

<sup>801</sup>See Appendix 3.

for the five questions. This figure is plotted on a scale of indigeneity for that particular category. After the Church has been rated for each of the six categories, the results of these ratings are averaged and plotted on a comprehensive scale of indigeneity.

Obviously, a high level of subjectivity is involved in rating the scales of indigeneity. Although this subjectivity cannot be totally avoided, we compiled our test panel from persons with a good working knowledge of the AFM in Africa. They were, the present Director of Missions in the AFM, Edgar Gschwend, Adam Mtsweni, a pastor in the AFM in Africa for the past 21 years, as well as Agrippa Khathide, a graduated pastor of the AFM in Africa for the past 9 years, representing the younger generation of blacks in the AFM in Africa. Being a former missionary in the AFM in Africa and a student of that Church for the past ten years, I also completed the test. The average score of our test panel for each category was then regarded as representative of the AFM in Africa's position.

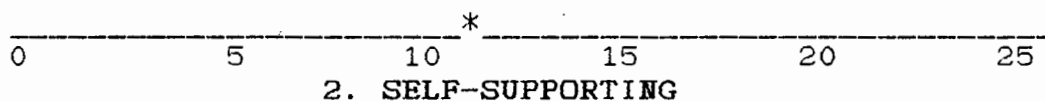
The scales of indigeneity and how the AFM in Africa rates will now be shown.

## Scales of indigeneity:



## 1. SELF-ADAPTING

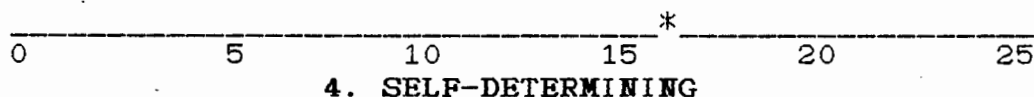
The AFM in Africa scores 21 on the self-adapting scale. All church activities are conducted in their own language and the music and songs sung are mostly culturally relevant. The liturgy is definitely appealing to black people in general and can be regarded as a growth factor. A high level of personal participation in the liturgy by lively singing, clapping hands and dancing while worshipping is an integral part. Being raised in a "spirit-conscious" culture, the pentecostal emphasis on the Holy Spirit fills a vacuum. The fact that membership is mostly from one homogeneous group helps their self-adapting.



The AFM in Africa only scores 12 on the self-supporting scale. Up till now, it was heavily dependent on the white AFM for financial subsidy. This financial dependency hindered the AFM in Africa to grow qualitatively. Subsidy can help growth, but if the dependents never learn to give financially themselves or to stand upon their own feet, it becomes a negative factor.

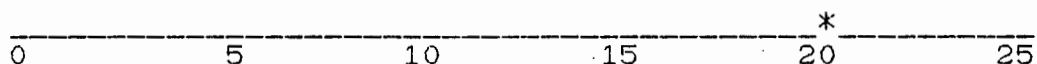


On the self-giving scale the AFM in Africa scores worst with only 11. Not much attention is given to becoming active in social ministry at all. Certainly they would aid victims of disasters, but being mostly poor themselves their resources are limited.



The AFM in Africa scored 16 on the self-determining scale. A factor that is to a large extent determining here, is the big role that the white AFM (mission) and white missionaries

(overseers) fulfilled in the decision-making process of the AFM in Africa.



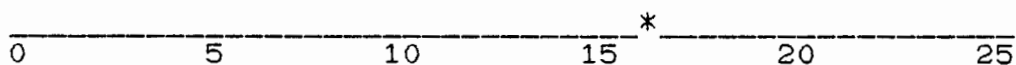
#### 5. SELF-FUNCTIONING

On the self-functioning scale the AFM in Africa scored 20. Almost all leadership positions can be filled by blacks, and though insufficient, there are leadership training programmes for members.



#### 6. SELF-PROPAGATING

Self-propagating is one of the strong indigenized areas of the AFM in Africa, with a score of 22. As is the case with most Pentecostal churches, the evangelical mandate is regarded as a priority. Without any doubt the vigorous evangelisation of the AFM in Africa contributed much to the growth of the Church.



#### 7. COMPREHENSIVE SCALE OF INDIGENEITY

The AFM in Africa scores 17 on the comprehensive scale of indigeneity. Their stronger areas of indigenization are in self-adapting, self-functioning and self-propagation. Their weaker areas are on the financial and decision-making level, namely self-supporting, self-giving and self-determining.



## The relationship between the white AFM and the AFM in Africa

As has already been shown in the evaluation of the mission policy of the AFM, the relationship between the white AFM and AFM in Africa was that of the traditional "Mother-Daughter church". This relationship was characterized by some white missionaries making big sacrifices to work among the blacks, and strong financial assistance from the whites to the blacks. But there was also a policy of paternalism,<sup>802</sup> and a hesitancy by the White church to hand over the leadership of the Blacks to themselves.

The history of the AFM abounds with examples of their super-paternalistic approach in missions.<sup>803</sup> This is understandable, bearing in mind the traditional view whites had of the natural abilities of blacks. Driven by their feeling of white supremacy and in line with Henry Venn's view, they put themselves in the position of "guardian" over the black "mission churches" until they attained "full

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<sup>802</sup>The tendency of the missionary or sponsoring group to assume a place of authority or undue influence on the developing church.

<sup>803</sup>See: pp.95, 103, 160-163.

maturity".<sup>804</sup> In contrast to their policy was an early report like:

A fact not duly appreciated, is that the vast majority of native work is being conducted by natives themselves without white assistance, except in the general direction and superintendence<sup>805</sup> through the Executive Council in Johannesburg.

There is no fault in helping a young church to become structured and grow. However, adopting Venn's approach results in certain problems, as is shown by the AFM.

Firstly, the "parental" party is usually very reluctant to let go of their position of authority over the younger church, because they lack discernment on the state of "maturity" of their "guardian object". Secondly, this paternalistic approach is usually the result of a feeling of racial supremacy by the "helping" party. Thirdly, ignoring the principle of indigeneity, and in line with the above, the "mission church" is expected to be modelled on the so-called "mother-church, whether it is culturally relevant or not. Fourthly, its most devastating effect was on the development of indigenous black leadership.

The opinion poll amongst black pastors in the AFM in Africa revealed that only 44% felt that the white AFM

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<sup>804</sup>Comforter, March 1919, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>805</sup>Comforter, July/August 1911.

treated them as a mature church. 51% felt that they themselves ought to determine their future and definitely not the white AFM. The majority (88%) believed that they should not become an independent and separate church apart from the White AFM but that the unity should stay intact.<sup>806</sup>

Church Growth advocate Eddie Smith rightly believes that, "Few obstacles obstruct balanced church growth more than paternalism".<sup>807</sup> Paternalism usually stems from the sense of responsibility for the work, but often from mistrust of the new Christians and their abilities to lead the church. Fear of doctrinal or denominational deviation also produces paternalism. Bavinck bluntly says,

The white race inadvertently has a certain feeling of superiority. It is soon inclined to think that without its own help other races cannot make any progress. Especially where this feeling of superiority is enforced by political control, there is a great chance that the white church will assume it has the right to exercise a long period of guardianship over native churches. In such cases, however, it is well to remember that the Scriptures know nothing of the concept of guardianship within the church. Political norms may never be transferred to the church.<sup>808</sup>

Bavinck is obviously right in arguing that nowhere in the New Testament are the churches of Palestine treated as separate entities distinct from those of Asia Minor and

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<sup>806</sup>Opinion Poll, 1983. See Appendix 2, section 5.

<sup>807</sup>Smith, 1984, op. cit., p.125.

<sup>808</sup>Bavinck, op. cit., p.198.

Greece.<sup>809</sup> Nowhere is there any question of any authority which the older churches exercise over the young.

Throughout the entire New Testament the church is referred to as a living whole, a unity growing out of a single root, and built upon a single foundation.<sup>810</sup>

The problem of paternalism sometimes surfaces in the areas of money and subsidy. Ebbie Smith is convinced that, "nowhere is paternalism more apparent or more destructive than in relation to subsidy".<sup>811</sup> Subsidy, the provision of financial and material needs from sources outside the congregation, has long constituted a major question for missionary strategy. Subsidy does not always lead to dependence or paternalism, but these are the usual tendencies. "When both segments are contributing according to ability and the giving segment does not demand or expect control, subsidy may be used with positive effect".<sup>812</sup> Subsidy puts a ceiling on outreach. If every new church must await financial backing from outside, a built-in limitation exists, whereas indigenous churches that can live, and reproduce in their own settings allow for unlimited expansion. E. LeRoy Lawson and Tetsunao Yamamori advise:

The missionary dollar is bad when...it creates dependency...it builds institutions which cannot

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<sup>809</sup> Ibid., p.192.

<sup>810</sup> Ibid.

<sup>811</sup> Smith, 1984, op. cit., p.124.

<sup>812</sup> Ibid., p.63.

maintain themselves...it shows a disrespect for the nationals...it stops church growth.<sup>813</sup>

John Vaughan believes that, "chronic shortage in funding tends to strengthen mission and evangelistic activities by reinforcing indigenous concepts and practices of church growth".<sup>814</sup> Carried to the extreme, however, severe casualties may result.

Paternalism in the AFM must be overcome if the AFM in Africa is to develop in healthy ways. Although this has changed considerably there is still room for improvement. Overcoming this methodological error remains an imperative step in balanced church growth.

#### The AFM and Politics:

While the white AFM lost members as a result of the split with the Pentecostal Protestant Church in 1958,<sup>815</sup> fortunately the same did not happen to the AFM in Africa.

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<sup>813</sup> Lawson, E. LeRoy & Yamamori, Tetsunao: Church Growth: Everybody's Business. Cincinnati: New Life Books, no date, pp.122-123.

<sup>814</sup> Vaughan, John N.: "The Fuller Factor", in The Complete Book of Church Growth (ed. Elmer Towns, John N. Vaughan, David J. Seifert). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1983, p.120.

<sup>815</sup> For a complete discussion see: Burger, op. cit., pp.316-346.

As was already mentioned, the AFM in Africa remained through the years almost totally apolitical. Whether this ultimately had an influence on their quantitative growth is hard to prove. By heavily emphasizing and doing evangelism, not much energy was left over for social concerns. But this, in turn, probably harmed their prophetic role and stand among black youths.

Moller describes the traditional point of view of the AFM in regard political matters as following,

members were free to vote for the political candidate of their choice, but were discouraged from becoming actively involved in party politics.<sup>816</sup>

With the passing of time the participation of members in party politics was reservedly accepted, with the condition that,

party political matters were never to be brought into the church, and that the interests of the Kingdom of God were always to have precedence over political views and actions.<sup>817</sup>

Moller, however, acknowledges that the AFM (and also the other Pentecostal churches) seldom if ever, issued statements or took a stand which addressed the existing political situation. "Such statements and stances were left to the historic churches".<sup>818</sup> Moller makes it very clear

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<sup>816</sup> Moller, 1988, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>817</sup> Ibid.

<sup>818</sup> Ibid.

that "the church can never be aloof and uninvolved regarding the social, political and economic needs in which people may find themselves".<sup>819</sup>

Ben Engelbrecht believes that,

Die inhoud van die waarheidskennis en daarom ook van die getuienis wat aan die kerk toevertrou is, maak dit vir hom onmoontlik om van die politiek afsydig te staan.<sup>820</sup>

At the same time he rejects two extreme positions. Firstly, "dat die kerk bloot deur sy heilsame teenwoordigheid in die wêreld 'n onregstreekse invloed ten goed op die politiek moet probeer uitoefen". Secondly,

dat die kerk self subjek van die politieke ordening sal word wat die staat of met verdringing bedreig of 'n instrument word in die hande van die staat wat die kerk vir sy eie oogmerke gebruik, los van die bedoelinge van God.<sup>821</sup>

We could add to these unacceptable positions, the common understanding (also historically the AFM's understanding) of the involvement of Christians in human rights matters or in the political process, is that Christians should remain "apolitical" or maintain a position of political neutrality. What is said in the quote to follow

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<sup>819</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>820</sup> Engelbrecht, op. cit., p.103.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid.

about apolitical missionaries certainly is also applicable to Christians.

The consequence of an attitude of political neutrality is that missionaries, thinking that they have remained "neutral", may in fact be backing an unjust order. In the name of not wanting to get involved, missionaries have often acquiesced to the way things are, and in this way shared in the responsibility for the perpetuation of injustice, corruption, and social sin. There may, therefore, be no way to avoid involvement.<sup>822</sup>

Although J.M. Vorster would probably agree with the above, he warns,

Politieke betrokkenheid van die Afrikaanse kerke moet egter nie sonder voorbehoud aangemoedig word nie. Daar skuil die gevaar in dat die kerk in sy profetiese getuienis en diens sy grense kan oorskry en sy wese verloën. Daar skuil ook die gevaar in dat die Bybelse boodskap versluier word in die politieke beskouings en ideale van die dag of aan bepaalde politieke stelsels en denkrigtings diensbaar gemaak word. Daar moet dus gewaak word teen piëtistiese onbetrokkenheid maar ook teen aktivistiese oorbetrokkenheid.<sup>823</sup>

Vorster in accordance with W.A. Visser t' Hooft believes the church can only get involved as long as it keeps its unique character and remains faithful to the gospel.<sup>824</sup>

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<sup>822</sup>"The Development of Guidelines on Missionary Involvement in Social-Justice and Human-Rights Issues", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Jan. 1982, p.9.

<sup>823</sup>Vorster, 1984, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>824</sup>Visser t' Hooft, W.A.: The Ecumenical Movement and the Racial Problem. Paris: Blom, 1954, p.53.



Johannes N. Vorster in his study of Rom.13 and Rev.13 concludes that although Rom.13 and Rev.13 do not give us a complete picture of the relationship in the first century between church and state, it at least indicate that "vroee Christene politie betrokke was en hoe hulle politie betrokke was".<sup>825</sup>

Whites usually attribute black Christian's involvement in politics to radicalism, fueled by communistic influences. However, an aspect that few whites know anything about and is worth our attention in this regard, is black worldview.<sup>826</sup> John Mbiti says

There is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion.<sup>827</sup>

Thus, for the African, there is no dualism that would confine religion to the realm of the "spiritual". Instead, all of life is understood to be religious by its very nature. MacRobert attests to this, saying, "In fact, in most of the languages of Africa there is no native word for

<sup>825</sup>Vorster, Johannes N.: "Die Vroeë Christene en die Politiek" in Church in Context (ed. Cilliers Breytenbach). Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1988, p.104.

<sup>826</sup>Certainly, is the worldview of black's not the only reason why some black Christians are involved in political issues.

<sup>827</sup>Mbiti, John: African Religions and Philosophy. New York: Praeger, 1969, p.2.

religion because religion is all of life".<sup>828</sup> Because of this holistic view, "In Africa, spiritual and political power were all but identical...".<sup>829</sup> Another example is the USA, where "many of the early black ministers and theologians...were deeply involved in politics which they saw as a legitimate means of Christian action".<sup>830</sup>

Frank Chikane describes how "grassroots" Africans in South Africa visualise and understand their spirituality, saying,

Our spirituality was a holistic form of spirituality. There was no conception here of a dualistic world of the spiritual which was different from that of the social. Our services of worship, our spiritual activism was launched within the very social dynamics of our society. In any case, the African world-view of life and its conception of some form of deity was never dualistic. Africans' total life experiences were understood and interpreted in relation to their God.<sup>831</sup>

Being convinced that the church has a special responsibility to fulfil towards the political problematics in South Africa, J.M. Vorster answers the question, "how?"

Hierdie roeping moet die kerk op 'n kerklike manier vervul, dit wil sê in gehoorsaamheid aan die Koning van die kerk, Jesus Christus, alleen. Hoe anders dan as om nederig en ootmoedig vir die owerheid te bid, om profeties-krities die evangelie in al sy konsekwensies te verkondig, om 'n unieke gemeenskap in Christus te

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<sup>828</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>830</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>831</sup> Chikane, op. cit., p.33.

wees en om in die gestalte van 'n dienskneg die hand na nood uit te steek?<sup>832</sup>

Representing Church Growth thought, Peter Wagner admits that the church does not have an option as to whether or not it will be involved in social ministry.<sup>833</sup> However, as we have mentioned earlier, Wagner defines two types of social ministry, namely, social service and social action.<sup>834</sup> Social service is "the kind of social ministry geared to meet the needs of individuals and groups of persons in a direct and immediate way." Examples of this type of social ministry are feeding the poor, giving of clothing etc. Social action is the "kind of ministry geared toward changing social structures". Thus, social action, by definition involves socio-political changes. The end goal of social action is to substitute just (or more just) for unjust (or less just) political structures.

Wagner is convinced that the way that the church participates in each has an influence on the way the church grows in membership.

Research on the growth and decline of churches has shown that simply the degree of involvement with fulfilling the cultural mandate does not directly influence growth rates. But...when churches are involved in social ministries, the churches which

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<sup>832</sup>Vorster, J.M., 1984, op. cit., p.24.

<sup>833</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.36.

<sup>834</sup>Ibid.

specialize in social service tend to attract more new<sup>835</sup> members than the ones specializing in social action.

Wagner believes that there are six reasons why social action hinders growth.<sup>836</sup> Firstly, the danger of elitism. That is when church leaders lose touch with its church members whose convictions about Christian involvement in social issues are not reflected in the attitudes and actions of the leaders. Secondly, the danger of divisiveness because of the controversial nature of social action. Thirdly, the danger of dehumanization. "When a congregation or denomination takes a political stand, it does so in the name of its members whether its members agree or not." This can be dehumanizing. Fourthly, the danger of social impotence. Congregations that allow themselves to get involved in controversial social action affairs, for the most part, end up losing social strength. Fifthly, the danger of bungling. Social problems are extremely complex and difficult and church leaders rarely have the expertise to come to intelligent decisions about them. Sixthly, the danger of Constantinism. When the church controls the world, it tends to lose prophetic power.

However, Wagner remains convinced that the church should get involved in politics as long they do not go about

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<sup>835</sup>Ibid., p.37.

<sup>836</sup>Ibid., pp.193-194

their social ministries in the wrong way.<sup>837</sup> In explaining the "right way" Wagner uses Ralph Winter's "modality" and "sodality" structures.<sup>838</sup> The first structure, a modality (congregational structure), is what most people think of as "church". This structure is people-oriented. The second structure, a sodality (missions structure), differs from a modality in being task-oriented, rather than people-oriented. Examples of this would be para-church organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With a Mission, etc. Unlike modalities, which are usually governed through consensus, sodalities are managed by objectives. Both structures are in the broad sense of the word, church structures. "They have different styles and different purposes, but each is a manifestation of the community of the King."<sup>839</sup>

Wagner continues to argue that unless social issues are properly matched to appropriate church structures, church growth can be negatively affected. He concludes that mission structures (sodalities) are stronger than congregational structures (modalities) in promoting social action causes.

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<sup>837</sup>Ibid., p.184.

<sup>838</sup>Winter, Ralph D.: "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission", in Missiology. January 1974, pp. 121-139.

<sup>839</sup>Ibid., p.187.

Any mission structure can gather strength without coercion, produce identity without division, and allow for cooperation without compromise. Congregational structures (modalities) however, can be damaged if they are improperly involved in social action issues. History demonstrates that it can produce discord, divisiveness and disillusionment. Therefore, congregational structures are better suited to social services, whereas mission structures are better equipped to deal with social action.

If Wagner's observations are correct, and we have no reason to doubt his research, then the AFM in Africa's reluctance to get involved in social action issues clearly helped their church growth. However, as we have already shown, their stance has also had a negative influence on their credibility amongst younger generation in the black communities. Although there certainly is validity in Wagner's view, differentiating between social service and social action will not be so easy in all communities and countries. To know where social service ends and social action begins might prove to be very confusing in the context of South Africa. At the same time his argument can easily be misused by leaders who are not willing to fulfill their prophetic role in political issues. It also is true that social action might sometimes be divisive by nature. That was the tension that the Old Testament prophets had to face all the time. If the church wants to remain faithful to

the demands of the Kingdom, unbiblical political practices, even if they are divisive, have to be addressed by the church in the name of righteousness and justice.

The church has no option but to relentlessly expose every ideology to the left and the right, to illuminate every sphere of life in the light of scripture. That is what it means to be Church. In South Africa the church also has a unique opportunity to fulfill a reconciliatory role. There are areas in which the AFM in Africa is truly portraying the church of Christ, holding up the banners of faith, hope and salvation. But in the area of its prophetic calling, it has failed up till now. Therefore it befits us to return constantly to God and one another in a spirit of true repentance.

#### **Pentecostal Missiology:**

When one attempts to capture the motivating beliefs that propelled the AFM into missions, it soon becomes clear that although not academically articulated and systematized, it has had a missions theology. Former General-Secretary of the AFM, David du Plessis once when addressing a number of ecumenical leaders was asked, "what is the difference between you and us?", he replied:

Gentlemen, comparisons are odious, and I do not wish to injure anyone's feelings or hurt your pride. But the truth as I see it is this: You have the truth on ice,

and I have it on fire.<sup>840</sup>

This "on fire" pentecostal mission theology has tended to be a "theology on the move", believes Pentecostal missiologist Grant McClung.<sup>841</sup> Its character has been more experiential than cognitive, more activist than reflective. Pentecostals have often acted now and theologized later. Wagner says,

When compared to other significant Christian traditions, Pentecostals have majored in being doers of the Word, much more than just hearers of the Word or even writers of the Word.<sup>842</sup>

Much in line with the rest of the Pentecostal Movement, the AFM has had, since its inception, underlying theological assumptions which have formed the impulse for its missionary expansion. The scope of this thesis does not allow us to deal with it comprehensively, but we will nevertheless cover the major themes as they relate to missions.

In order to understand Pentecostal missions strategy the Pentecostal's value for the Word and Spirit must be in focus. Spittler's statement is a good example of this,

It is clear that as an institution of the twentieth century, the Pentecostal missionary enterprise has been driven as much toward mission by the great commission - call that what to do - as by the personalized experience of the spirit of Pentecost - call that how

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<sup>840</sup> Du Plessis, David: A Man Called Mr. Pentecost. South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Pub., 1977, pp.181-182.

<sup>841</sup> McClung, op. cit., p.47.

<sup>842</sup> Wagner, C. Peter: Azusa Street and Beyond. Foreword, South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Pub., 1986, p.xiii.



to get the job done.<sup>843</sup>

Harry Boer similarly emphasizes that it was not the great commission - which in written form would not have existed at that time - but the Holy Spirit's action in the first Christian Pentecost that motivated and fueled the early Christian mission, with its powerful and unexpected leap from Jew to Gentile.<sup>844</sup> However, this is a position that is not generally accepted by conservative evangelicals. The issue of "evidence" for the Pentecostal experience,<sup>845</sup> or just supernatural evidence in contemporary Christian experience in general, proves a case in point. Evangelicals, holding a dispensational view, say that one should be content with the authority of the written Word alone - sola scriptura.<sup>846</sup> Although this statement, at first glance, sounds quite Reformation-based, Pomerville believes that it rather reveals the influence of post-Reformation Protestant Scholasticism.<sup>847</sup> "It points to the absence of statements

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<sup>843</sup>Spittler, op. cit., p.420.

<sup>844</sup>Boer, Harry: Pentecost and Missions. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961, pp.15-16.

<sup>845</sup>Conservative evangelicals have a problem with evidence per se, not merely the evidence of tongues.

<sup>846</sup>Bruner is a good example of this viewpoint. See: Bruner, Frederick D.: Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and New Testament Witness. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, pp.82,115.

<sup>847</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.93.

regarding the "witness of the Spirit" and the "outward charismatic working of the Spirit in conservative evangelical theology".<sup>848</sup> Bernard Ramm endorses this, saying that in the preparation of his book, he found that the doctrine of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit had almost disappeared from evangelical literature and theology.<sup>849</sup>

Is Scripture the only evidence for validating Christian experience? "Does sola scriptura"<sup>850</sup> mean that the only criterion for validating Christian experience is the biblical text?", asks Pomerville.<sup>851</sup> Ramm would deny this, pointing to the Reformation doctrine of the testimonium, the witness of the Spirit.<sup>852</sup> Pomerville argues that sola scriptura did not contrast the authority of Scripture with the authority of the Holy Spirit, neither was it

intended to mean Scripture alone in the sense of alone or apart from the Spirit. The Bible-only mentality eliminates the witness of the Spirit in the doctrine of

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<sup>848</sup> Ibid.

<sup>849</sup> Ramm, Bernard: The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959, p.7.

<sup>850</sup> This is a phrase coming out of theological disputations with Roman Catholic theologians on the subject of the ultimate reference of authority. The debate contrasted the authority of the church with the authority of Scripture.

<sup>851</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.97.

<sup>852</sup> Ramm, op. cit., p.66.

revelation, replacing it with rational proofs and argumentation about Scripture's authority. The witness of the Spirit and faith are subordinated to human reason in that mentality; the ontic principle is replaced by the noetic.<sup>853</sup>

Jack Rogers states about Calvin,

Calvin strove for the Augustinian middle way of the church. He fought against two extremes. He rejected the rationalistic Scholasticism on the one side who demanded proofs prior to faith in Scripture. He rejected with equal firmness the spiritualistic sectarians on the other side who claimed leadings of the Spirit apart from the Scripture. For Calvin, 'Word and Spirit belong inseparably together'.<sup>854</sup>

Indeed, it is clear that Reformation theology had no such dichotomy of Word and Spirit. For Pentecostals, the essence of Christianity is not merely intellectual commitment to a written revelation but it concerns a dynamic encounter with God the Holy Spirit in connection with that written revelation.

Growing out of the fundamentalist and holiness roots of biblicism, Pentecostals have taken the literal interpretation of Scripture another step further into their missionary practices. If the Bible says, "Go into all the world..." and records the actions of the early church obeying this commission, then Pentecostals have believed

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<sup>853</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.98.

<sup>854</sup>Rogers, Jack: Biblical Authority. Waco: Word Books, 1977, p.27.

that this is a command and model to be taken literally for this generation.<sup>855</sup>

McClung confirms that, for Pentecostals, the issue of biblical authority is non-negotiable and is the beginning point for missions theology and strategy.<sup>856</sup> That this is also the exact position of the AFM is clear from their doctrinal confession,

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, 2 Tim.3:16,17 and the only, but all sufficient rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim.3:10,15; 2 Pet.1:21; Joh.17:17; Ps.119:105.<sup>857</sup>

However, it is important to distinguish biblical authority from biblical inspiration.

Pentecostal discussions about biblical inerrancy provide a case study in theology as learned behaviour. It is the authoritative role of Scripture that more naturally characterizes Pentecostalism than intricate arguments about the inerrant quality of the biblical text.<sup>858</sup>

Naturally, when the question was raised by evangelicals, Pentecostals readily joined the more conservative

<sup>855</sup> Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.607.

<sup>856</sup> McClung, Grant L., Jr.: "Theology and Strategy of Pentecostal Missions" in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Fort Lee, NJ, Vol.12, No.1, Jan. 1988, p.2.

<sup>857</sup> Handbook for the Native Section, 1946, p.1, available at the AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

<sup>858</sup> Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.805.

inerrantist group. Spittler is convinced that "biblical authority more strongly governs Pentecostal belief and practice than do any of the other values...".<sup>859</sup>

Assemblies of God missiologist Paul A. Pomerville says,

While some may question their use of The Book, their hermeneutics, nevertheless Pentecostals seek to be led by Scripture as well as by the Spirit in their missions effort. Their textbook for missions strategy often boils down to the Book of Acts.<sup>860</sup>

Non-pentecostal reporter Robert Niklaus attributed the mushrooming growth of Brazillian Pentecostalism in Sao Paulo - the largest city in the largest Catholic country in the world - to a literal interpretation of the Bible, saying, that their "...strong stand on the scriptures.... found immediate acceptance among the people, if not among the church leaders".<sup>861</sup>

Although the AFM has considerable theological affinity with other conservative Christians, their distinctive pneumatology fulfills a significant role in their theology of mission. While this is not the place for a lengthy treatment of the subject in itself, it should be seen as a central element in the missionary fervor and practice of the

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<sup>859</sup>Spittler, op. cit., p.418.

<sup>860</sup>Pomerville, Paul A.: "The Pentecostals and Growth" in Azusa Street and Beyond, South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Pub., 1986, p.151.

<sup>861</sup>Niklaus, Robert: "Brazil: Pentecostal Invation" in Evangelical Missions Quarterly, Vol.18, No.2, p.117.

AFM pioneers. They were theologically motivated by literal biblicism and the dynamic personal working of the Holy Spirit. Prudencio Damboriena stated that pentecostal beliefs and practices cannot be understood until one grasps,

...the centrality of the Third Person of the Trinity in their theology and in their lives. To them Pentecost is not a mere historical event that took place almost two thousand years ago, but an always renewed presence of the Spirit in the world. The Holy Spirit is, <sup>862</sup> as then, the 'creator' and the 'vivifier' of men.

McClung quotes leading Pentecostal pioneer Donald Gee who like the holiness teachers such as Torrey, Moody, and Simpson, saw that "...the divine purpose in the baptism in the Holy Spirit was an enduement with power for witnessing and service".<sup>863</sup> A Pentecostal professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Cecil M. Robeck, believes that though some Pentecostal theologians might not fully agree, pentecostal missiologists will contend that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is primarily for ministry, especially for evangelism.<sup>864</sup> According to the doctrinal confession of the AFM, the church understands the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an indispensable enduement of power for service (Luk. 24:29; Acts 1:8), and insists that it is normative and

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<sup>862</sup>Damboriena, Prudencio: Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity. Washington D.C.: Corpus Books, 1969, p.87.

<sup>863</sup>McClung, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>864</sup>Robeck, op. cit., p.5.

expected for each believer to seek for a "personal Pentecost".<sup>865</sup> Pomerville makes the statement that,

A common error on the part of Pentecostals is to attempt to explain church growth in terms of one dimension - the Holy Spirit. But perhaps an equally deceptive error made by non-Pentecostals is the underestimation of that one dimension of church growth, specifically,<sup>866</sup> the dynamic of the Pentecostal experience itself...

Pentecostals remain insistent that God is to be personally experienced through the Holy Spirit, in other words there need not be any polarization between doctrine and experience. God the Holy Spirit is personally active, living in and directing its servants. Although it may seem foreign to those who are accustomed to an institutional approach to the mission of the Church, to Pentecostals "power-happenings", such as the healing of the sick, deliverance of a demon possessed etc., through the power of the Holy Spirit are to be expected and are entirely in accord with the New Testament concept of the Church's mission.

In order to understand and evaluate Pentecostal pneumatology fairly, it must be viewed within the context of renewal. Pomerville believes that it concerns a neglected dimension of the Holy Spirit's ministry when he states,

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<sup>865</sup> Handbook for the Native Section, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>866</sup> Pomerville, 1986, op. cit., p.151.

'Renewal,' therefore, explains the Pentecostal's emphasis on the outward-charismatic dimension of the Spirit's ministry. Pentecostalism's emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit and His charismatic gifts does not indicate a truncated, narrow pneumatology. Rather in dealing with a restoration of the Holy Spirit's outward charismatic ministry of power, it represents a return to a New Testament pneumatology.<sup>867</sup>

Pentecostal pneumatology is no different from that of Protestantism in general, except for this emphasis on the Holy Spirit's subsequent baptizing and charismatic work.<sup>868</sup> It also includes the inward work of the Spirit in Christian initiation, growth in Christ and in the fruit of the Spirit. However, as a renewal movement it emphasizes the charismatic-power dimension of the Spirit's ministry.

The significant contribution of Pentecostalism to contemporary missions lies in its pneumatology. One of the deficiencies in contemporary missions is the inordinate "silence on the Holy Spirit".<sup>869</sup> While this is confirmed by

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<sup>867</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.81.

<sup>868</sup> Pentecostals believe that baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to the initial filling of the believer with the Spirit and take it to be the same empowering experience that was accompanied by the speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost. See: Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, pp.410-417.

<sup>869</sup> The following authors support the thesis that the role of the Holy Spirit in modern missions and mission theology is greatly neglected:  
Lindsell, Harold: An Evangelical Theology of Mission. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1949.  
Kane, J. Herbert: Christian Missions in Biblical

(Footnote Continued)



both mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians, from a Pentecostal perspective this pneumatological silence is critical for the response to God's mission today. David Bosch states that pneumatology began to be neglected as early as the second century, and that the missionary dimension of pneumatology was rediscovered only in the eighteenth century, but that it played no significant role in Protestant theology.<sup>870</sup> Michael Green speaks of the neglect of the Spirit as a "domestication" of the Spirit in the West.<sup>871</sup> Roland Allen stated,

Missionary work as an expression of the Holy Spirit has received such slight and casual attention that it might almost escape the notice of the hasty reader.<sup>872</sup>

This still holds true as relatively little has been written on the crucial significance of the Holy Spirit in connection with the missionary witness of the Church. While evangelical missiologists readily confess the neglect of the Holy Spirit in mission theology and practice, they may not express that neglect in terms of the charismatic dimension of the Spirit's ministry. Perhaps the very systematic and

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(Footnote Continued)

Perspective. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974.

Allen, Roland: The Ministry of the Spirit. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960.

Boer, Harry: Pentecost and Missions. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.

<sup>870</sup> Bosch, 1980, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

<sup>871</sup> Green, Michael: I Believe in the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975, p12.

<sup>872</sup> Allen, op. cit., p. 21.

controversial theological context in which pneumatology has developed has contributed to the "silence on the Holy Spirit". Without question, this constricting of the activity of the Spirit in mission theology has weakened the missionary thrust of the western church, especially in the Third World.

Further evidence of the pneumatological hiatus in the western Protestant missionary heritage, concerns the impact of the western expression of Christianity and its theology on non-western cultures. Pomerville believes that,

The phenomenon of 'independency' movements in the wake of the impact of western missions in the Third World is a chief contemporary evidence of the neglect of the Spirit.<sup>873</sup>

Gottfried Oosterwal endorses this in addressing this "blind spot" in the western missionary and its effects in the Third World, saying,

For, it is precisely the absence or the lack of the power of God as a reality people can live by that has been a precipitating factor to these movements. In the African, Asian or Melanesian traditional religious setting, power was at the centre of their thinking, life and experience. And the spirit - of God, the gods or the ancestor - was a tangible reality. How remote, how intellectual, how powerless seems to be the God and the Spirit missionaries preach about or we (Western) Christians show in our lives. As one leader once expressed it in a conversation with a missionary: 'you have held back the Spirit.' The movements challenge our understanding of God, and our pneumatology...<sup>874</sup>

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<sup>873</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.74.

<sup>874</sup>Oosterwal, Gottfried. Modern Messianic Movements. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1973, p.36.

No wonder that the discovery of a Pentecostal expression of faith that spoke to the needs of the African in his cultural context and provided Christian means for dealing with the spirit world, became the impetus for the African independency movement. Pomerville is correct in arguing that the failure to provide a biblical world view regarding the spirit world and the role of the Holy Spirit for the church is a western lack of fidelity to biblical revelation.<sup>875</sup> Unfortunately this failure concerns not only the cultural insensitivity of the western missionary, but it also involves their failure to respond biblically to needs which biblical revelation amply provided for.

Another theme that is often used in theologizing about missions without articulating the pneumatological implications, is the kingdom of God. George Eldon Ladd is an example of this. In his excellent survey of the kingdom of God, he is chiefly concerned that the kingdom of God as the dynamic, redemptive activity of God himself in history. But he is unusually silent on the role of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>875</sup>Pomerville. 1985, op. cit., p.75.

This omission is probably due to the fact that the christological context of the Kingdom is consistently in focus in Ladd's treatment of the Kingdom.<sup>876</sup>

Wagner identifies two categories of "signs" of the kingdom of God:

Category A: Social signs or signs applied to a general class of people. These include 1) preaching good news to the poor, 2) proclaiming release to the captives, 3) liberating the oppressed, and 4) instituting the Year of Jubilee ("acceptable year of the Lord").

Category B: Personal signs applied to specific individuals. These include 1) restoring sight to blind people, 2) casting out demons and evil spirits, 3) healing sick people, 4) making lame people walk, 5) cleansing lepers, 6) restoring hearing to deaf people, and 7) raising the dead.<sup>877</sup>

Category B signs clearly involve the outward charismatic ministry of the Holy Spirit, while type A signs are linked to our social obligations. Without a doubt, the kingdom of God theme emphasizes two greatly neglected areas in conservative evangelicalism - the social and pneumatological implications of the Gospel. While Pentecostals are just as guilty in neglecting the former, it is that pneumatological dimension of the kingdom of God in evangelism which brings the Pentecostal contribution to contemporary mission into focus. The Kingdom theme is a mission theme because it

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<sup>876</sup>Ladd, George Eldon: The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

<sup>877</sup>Wagner. 1981, op. cit., p.16.

involves the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world of Missions. The church empowered by the Spirit demonstrates the Kingdom's presence by the preaching of the gospel, which is confirmed by signs and wonders (Mark 16:15-17,20). "The Kingdom in pneumatological terms has to do with the witness of the church in the Spirit's power and the universalization of mission under His direction."<sup>878</sup>

In the light of all of the above, Pentecostalism represents a biblical, relevant contribution to contemporary missions. Pomerville believes that,

As a renewal movement, emphasizing a neglected dimension of the Holy Spirit's ministry, Pentecostalism sets the subtle influence of post-Reformation Protestant Scholasticism in bold relief. It is at this point that Pentecostalism functions as a 'corrective' in contemporary missions.<sup>879</sup>

Paradoxically, the chief criticism against the Pentecostal Movement, the distinct, dynamic experience of the Spirit, reveals its chief contribution for contemporary missions. For Pentecostals Pentecost means that the church is not only confronted with the fact of the Holy Spirit's presence, but with the power of His presence, and the effects of His presence. Unlike mainline churches Pentecostals expect the "effects of His presence", to be manifested by healings, exorcisms, prophecies and the other charismatic gifts of the

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<sup>878</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.150.

<sup>879</sup>Ibid., p.79.

Spirit. Pomerville highlights another contribution when he shows that Protestant Scholasticism brought a distortion to the central Christian tradition. But, "Pentecostalism provides a corrective balance to the intense intellectualization of the faith that took place in that period".<sup>880</sup>

The biblical nature of mission cannot be completely brought into focus, nor can it be adequately stated, apart from a description of the Holy Spirit's role. Mission must have its source in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the trinitarian view of mission as set forth in Scripture.<sup>881</sup> But how is mission the self-revelation of the triune God in the Son and in the Holy Spirit? Roland Allen stated "It is in the revelation of the Holy Spirit as a missionary Spirit that the Acts stands alone in the New Testament".<sup>882</sup> George Peters speaks of the "superintendency" of the Holy Spirit in missions.<sup>883</sup> Bernard Ramm also states that the Holy Spirit is executive of the Godhead in the church age, and as such He makes concrete and real the will of the Father and the

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<sup>880</sup> Ibid. p.13. See also pp.63-78.

<sup>881</sup> See:  
 Bosch, 1985, op. cit., pp.240-242.

<sup>882</sup> Allen. op. cit., p.21.

<sup>883</sup> Peters, George W: A Biblical Theology of Missions.  
 Chicago: Moody Press, 1972, p.304.

Son.<sup>884</sup> In summary, the missionary role of the Spirit, in biblical perspective, is related inseparably with the sending and empowering of the church in mission. This sending, God's special mission, is characterized by the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Spirit with signs following.

The Pentecostal Movement, including the AFM has many times been criticized for too much emphasis on the Holy Spirit, and especially the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues. Early Pentecostal writings reveal the opposite. McClung believes that Pentecostal literature is replete with a strong Christology.<sup>885</sup> Pentecostal historian Stanley Frodsham claims that speaking with tongues has not been the principal feature of the Movement,

By no means. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been exalted as the One altogether lovely and as the chiefest among ten thousand, yea, as all in all. The first and foremost thing in the outpouring has been the magnifying of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>886</sup>

This same strong Christology emerges from both the history of the AFM in Africa, as well as in their doctrinal

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<sup>884</sup>Ramm, op. cit., p.30.

<sup>885</sup>McClung, 1988, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>886</sup>Frodsham, op. cit., p.272.

confession.<sup>887</sup> For them Jesus is personally present in the experience of empowerment as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Mrk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33). They believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which will "bring glory" to Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:14-15). Thus, Pentecostals will feel totally at ease with Bosch's statement

Mission thus indeed has a trinitarian basis, but in such a way that it has a christological concentration, because it is precisely Christology that accentuates God's entrance (his mission) into the world.<sup>888</sup>

Another major theological theme that relates to the theology of missions of the AFM is their eschatology. Eschatological urgency is at the heart of understanding the missionary zeal of the early AFM pioneers. An urgent appeal was made by a missionary in the Comforter for helpers, "Als iemand zich geroepen voelt om te komen helpen dan moet het onmiddellik geschieden; want de komst van Jezus is nabij."<sup>889</sup>

Anderson believes that early Pentecostalism was more a "second coming" than a "tongues movement".<sup>890</sup> However, Pentecostal views of eschatology are not unique to

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<sup>887</sup> Handbook for the Native Section. op. cit., pp.1,5.

<sup>888</sup> Bosch, 1985, op. cit., p.241.

<sup>889</sup> Trooster, December 1921, p.6.

<sup>890</sup> Anderson, op. cit., p.80.



Pentecostalism but are shared with the fundamentalist churches. "The Pentecostals, however are unique in viewing the outpouring of the Spirit as itself a fulfillment of end-time prophecy".<sup>891</sup> The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is seen by Pentecostals as an important sign of the end. The history of the AFM illustrates clearly that they regarded themselves as a missionary movement in an eschatological period of salvation history - the "last days". The outpouring of the Spirit in the twentieth century was seen as an outpouring for the express purpose of accomplishing the church's mission in the world. The question might be asked, what is the theological basis for conceiving of an age as the "last days", extending from the time of the apostles until now? Indeed, this question has great importance for viewing the Pentecostal Movement as an eschatological renewal in contemporary times. Pomerville believes that the theological basis for this view,

is the biblical motif of the kingdom of God. Both the assumption that mission takes place in an eschatological context and the emphasis on the extraordinary working of the Holy Spirit in contemporary mission are fundamental to the New Testament concept of the kingdom of God.<sup>892</sup>

For Pentecostal theology the hermeneutical horizon is the biblical concept of salvation history and its hermeneutical

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<sup>891</sup> Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.264.

<sup>892</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.58.

key is the already-present kingdom of God. For Pomerville the "new-age", according to New Testament theology, is an age of the Spirit, one characterized by His rule and the manifestation of His power.<sup>893</sup> The nature of the dynamic, present kingdom of God is such that it provides the people of God with an experience of the full dimension and depth of the Holy Spirit's ministry as they engage in their mission in the world.

In general Pentecostal eschatology may be characterized as premillennial, expecting the second advent of Christ prior to the establishment of the thousand year kingdom of Rev.20, and pretribulationist, expecting the rapture or removal of the church prior to a time of tribulation.<sup>894</sup> Logically, their view of eschatology governs their view of current events. For example, their perception of history has been most influenced by their premillennialist belief that "the restoration of Israel to Palestine is a sure sign of the soon return of Christ".<sup>895</sup>

Doctrinally the AFM in Africa believes,

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<sup>893</sup> Ibid., p.62.

<sup>894</sup> For an overview of Pentecostal perspectives on eschatology:  
Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements,  
 pp.264-268.

<sup>895</sup> Ibid., p.265.

...in the pre-millennial coming of Christ, first in the mid-heavens for those who will be ready for the rapture. 1 Cor. 15:51-52, 1 Thess. 4:15-18, Matt. 25:10; and later with His saints. Zech. 14:4, Jude 14.<sup>896</sup>

Analysts of Pentecostalism who have documented the symbiotic relationship between premillennialism, dispensationalism, and the belief in the imminency of Christ's return, are in accord that this forged the evangelistic fervor of the Pentecostal Movement in its infancy.<sup>897</sup> Nils Bloch-Hoell states that,

...the eschatology was strongly motivated towards missionary activity. The viewpoint that missionary activity has to be carried on with the purpose of precipitating the second coming of Christ is not unknown within the Pentecostal Movement.<sup>898</sup>

Not only has the sense of the imminency of Christ's return produced missionary zeal, but also other things like theologizing to be postponed. This is not to imply that Pentecostals functioned without a theology. Since its inception, Pentecostals have had underlying theological assumptions which have formed the impulse for the Movement's missionary expansion. But, they have expressed their theology orally. Hollenweger has perceptively identified and underscored this feature of Pentecostalism. He says

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<sup>896</sup> Handbook for the Native Section. op. cit., p.6.

<sup>897</sup> See: Bloch-Hoell, op. cit.; Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit.; Anderson, op. cit.

<sup>898</sup> Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., p.88.

In these preliterate, semiliterate, or postliterate cultures the medium of communication is - just as in biblical times - not the definition but the description, not the statement but the story, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not a systematic theology but a song, not the treatise but the TV program, not the articulation of concepts but the celebration of banquets.<sup>899</sup>

Church of God historian, Charles Conn responded to the criticism that the Pentecostals have produced little literature, by saying,

The belief in the second-coming of Christ has been so great that more emphasis has been placed on the present than the future. Our message has been one of immediacy - to reach as many of the lost with the message of Christ as is possible before His return. For that reason we have preached,<sup>900</sup> prayed, fasted and urged much, but have written little.

Pentecostal eschatology is also one of the chief contributing factors to their apolitical stance and lack of involvement in social issues. Since the end is near, they are indifferent to social change and have rejected the reformist methods of the optimistic postmillennialists and have concentrated on "saving souls" and letting social reforms result from human kind being "born again". Melvin Hodges seems to endorse this inadvertently by saying that the Pentecostals,

...see that the remedy of many of earth's ills must await the Second Advent of the King of kings, for which

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<sup>899</sup>Hollenweger, Walter J.: "Charismatic Renewal in the Third World: Implications for Mission", in Occasional Bulletin for Missionary Research (now IBMR). No.4, Apr.1980, p.69.

<sup>900</sup>Conn, 1956, op. cit., p.34.

they earnestly pray and wait. His coming will solve the problems of the social order.<sup>901</sup>

Although there is an element of truth in Hollenweger's observation that "as social conditions improve the fervent expectation of the imminent second coming disappears", much AFM missionary practice still proceeds from an inherent "last days mission theology".<sup>902</sup>

Johannes Verkuyl mentions missiologists like J.C. Hoekendijk and E. Jansen Schoonhoven who

throughout their writings note how important this (eschatological) motive was to the pioneer missionaries. Von Zinzendorf cannot be understood without it. The Student Volunteer Movement was full of it.<sup>903</sup>

Johannes Blauw states that since about 1930 the eschatological character of mission has been receiving more and more emphasis.<sup>904</sup> David Bosch, however, states that before the late nineteen-fifties

this eschatological dimension was, [however] partly obscured by the radically transcendental eschatology of Barth on the one hand and the existentialist eschatology of Bultmann on the other. It was during the nineteen-sixties that W. Pannenberg's theological contributions and especially J. Moltmann's theology of

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<sup>901</sup>Hodges, 1986, op. cit., p.88.

<sup>902</sup>Hollenweger, 1977, op. cit., p.417.

<sup>903</sup>Verkuyl, op. cit., p.167.

<sup>904</sup>Blauw, Johannes: The Missionary Nature of the Church. London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962, p.107.

hope opened the way to a more historical understanding of eschatology in which the future held the primacy.<sup>905</sup>

Bosch describes the way in which mission may be understood as an eschatological event as follows.<sup>906</sup> Firstly, mission may never be regarded as pre-condition or prerequisite for the coming of the end, neither may the Church hasten the end through her missionary fervour. This will "change eschatology into apocalypticism and ascribe to it a weight of its own, isolated from Christology". Secondly, mission as eschatological event does not mean that, in reaction to what we have just said, the Church should develop a ghetto mentality and simply turn in upon itself. Thirdly, mission as eschatological event reminds the Church that her task is never finished. Fourthly, mission as eschatological event proceeds from the certainty that the Kingdom of God is not only a future reality but is already present in our midst. Mission as eschatological event means, fifthly, that in our missionising, we approach the fulfillment. It is mission which should keep alive the hope for divine fulfillment of the Kingdom. Thus, sixthly, mission as eschatological event, furthermore, means infusing the world with hope. Lastly, mission as eschatological event arms the Church-in-mission against despondency. The message

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<sup>905</sup> Bosch, 1985, op. cit., p.234.

<sup>906</sup> Ibid., pp.235-238.

of the transcendent Kingdom and the knowledge that, in the final analysis, everything is in God's hands, gives us the necessary distance and austerity towards everything in the world.

Another assumption in the theology of mission of the AFM, is the sense of divine destiny. This assurance and conviction that God has placed the AFM in Southern Africa as a major force to win the lost for him is clear from their earliest writings. President of the AFM, P.L. le Roux stated,

Now the Lord has called us into being, a despised, peculiar people, and God wants to reveal through us that the power is from God and not from man.<sup>907</sup>

Dawid du Plessis shared this sense of divine destiny, saying,

Ek het al meer en meer tot die oortuiging gekom dat God ons Apostoliese Geloof Sending in Suid Afrika geplant het om die heerlike Pinkster lig nie alleen aan die blanke maar ook aan die miljoene naturelle in ons land te verkondig.<sup>908</sup>

This has been a powerfully motivating force thrusting the AFM all over Africa in the midst of rejection and persecution. Pentecostals are sometimes criticised that

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<sup>907</sup> Le Roux, P.L.: "Presidential Address", in The Comforter, June 1916, p.4.

<sup>908</sup> Du Plessis, Dawid J.: Trooster, Augustus 1941.

these convictions have implications of arrogance and triumphalism. McClung sums it up well saying,

Equal to the Pentecostals' statements regarding being chosen by God for a divine destiny are the expressions of humility and gratitude that God has blessed them with this privilege and will also hold them accountable for their stewardship of His gifts. Therefore one catches a sense of stewardship, responsibility, and mandate in Pentecostal literature.<sup>909</sup>

These are the fundamental elements that have provided dynamic motivational components in the overall theology of missions of the AFM.

### **AFM Ecclesiology**

The ecclesiology of the AFM can be regarded as one of the "growth factors" of the AFM in Africa. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, the history of the AFM made it clear that initially the whole inception of the AFM was primarily for missions. The name Apostolic Faith "Mission" clearly reflects the feeling of the early pioneers that it ought only to be an evangelistic mission and not an institutionalized Church. Although the AFM was reluctantly constituted as a church on August 2, 1913, anti-church sentiments prevailed till late in the fifties.<sup>910</sup> In the May 1933 edition of the *Comforter*, President Le Roux gave a

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<sup>909</sup> McClung, op. cit., p.54.

<sup>910</sup> Burger, op. cit., p.264-265.



review of "25 years of Pentecost in South Africa", in which he emphasized the missionary character of the AFM from the start.<sup>911</sup> The fact that the AFM regarded itself as a "mission", forged their evangelistic fervor for many years. Dawid du Plessis, the former General Secretary of the AFM said:

First let us consider that the Apostolic Faith Mission is a Mission, and shall be a Mission till Jesus comes. She has a special mission in South Africa to all colours and races of people.<sup>912</sup>

The second reason can be found in the doctrinal creed regarding the ecclesiology of the AFM in Africa:

The Saints meet together in the assembly for worship, for instruction in the Word and to observe the institution of the Lord's supper, and have as one of their main objects the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world.<sup>913</sup>

Although this probably does not differ much from other churches, their ecclesiology clearly reflects that "proclamation of the gospel...throughout the world" was regarded as a priority.

The AFM's position in this regard was consistent with that of Pentecostals worldwide. Initially those that experienced the Pentecostal experience had no desire to

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<sup>911</sup> Comforter, May 1933, p.1.

<sup>912</sup> Comforter, June/July 1941, p.7.

<sup>913</sup> Handbook for the Native Section. op. cit., p.7.

start new churches, but merely hoped to share their new-found baptism in the Spirit with the churches to which they belonged. However,

The early participants in the Pentecostal Movement were not welcome in mainline denominational churches because of the enthusiastic style of revivalistic worship and particularly because of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.<sup>914</sup>

Only then were they "forced" to gather in small groups, eventually forming evangelistic organisations, "faith missions", and churches. For many years they would remain suspicious of ecclesiastical systems, some even to the extent of refusing to organize and have a name or even a membership list.<sup>915</sup> Although the concept of the church has not generally been central to Pentecostal faith, there are signs in recent decades of increasing attention to ecclesiology. This is essential as David Bosch ably points out.

I have seen, in my own denomination, how a weak ecclesiology has opened the door for racially segregated churches and what this has done to the credibility and evangelism of the church.<sup>916</sup>

The most distinctive Pentecostal contribution to ecclesiology might be in two distinct but complementary

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<sup>914</sup> Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.257.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid.

<sup>916</sup> Bosch, David J.: "Church Growth Missiology", in Missionalia. Vol.16, No.1, Apr.1988, p.20.

thrusts. The first sees the spiritual gifts as an intrinsic element in the life and equipment of the church.

Rather as Orthodox and Catholics see baptism and Eucharist as constitutive of church, so some Pentecostals see these charismatic endowments of the Holy Spirit not just as evangelistic equipment but as forming and shaping the church.<sup>917</sup>

The second thrust has come from reflection on Pentecostal missionary experience. Whereas many Pentecostal assemblies experienced rapid growth as a result of the missionary labour, a lack of equipping believers became evident in some instances. This caused Missionaries, reflecting on the missionary purpose, to produce a greater focus on the nature of the church.<sup>918</sup> The pioneer missiologist Melvin Hodges' book The Indigenous Church,<sup>919</sup> broke new ground in this regard. Hodges saw that initial conversion to Christ had to be followed by the conscious building of the church.

F.P. Moller asks and answers the question: "How much has the charismata, as practiced by Pentecostals, helped or hindered the formation of churches?"<sup>920</sup> He is convinced that it retarded the formation of churches in the following ways. Firstly, by overemphasising the "leading of the Spirit",

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<sup>917</sup>Ibid., p.214.

<sup>918</sup>Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.214.

<sup>919</sup>Hodges, 1956, op. cit.

<sup>920</sup>Moller, 1975, op. cit., pp.293-295.

they regarded the structural and organizational aspect of their religion as a matter of minor importance. Secondly, in reaction to the institutionalized mainline churches, they feared that any form of ecclesiastical organization would dampen the working of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, their expectancy of the imminent return of Christ forced them to believe that they ought not to waste their time with structurally forming churches. Much rather they should evangelize a lost world. Fourthly, the sheer value they attached to their belief that once saved and filled with the Spirit, every problem could be solved through faith and prayer, caused them to disregard social, cultural, political and other issues that would usually be addressed by institutionalized churches.

Hierdie houding is versterk deur 'n dualistiese siening van die verhouding, gees en natuur; dit wat nie "deur die gees"<sup>921</sup> is nie, is beskou as wêrelds en selfs sondigs.

Although the above arrested the structuring of churches, much of the same dynamics certainly enhanced the early Pentecostals evangelistic and mission fervour, thus giving impetus to their quantitative growth. Moller believes the following factors helped them forming churches. Firstly, not only was the pentecostal teaching on the Holy Spirit and their practice of the charismata instrumental in them being rejected by the mainline churches, but at the same time it

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<sup>921</sup>Ibid., p.294.

was also a bonding factor. Secondly, as already said, the charismata added much to their evangelistic and mission activities. Thirdly, the misuses that occurred and were wrongly ascribed to be "the work of the Holy Spirit" forced early Pentecostal leaders to formulate doctrinal and liturgical policies, which in turn eventually helped the forming of churches. Fourthly, their rapid growth in numbers created the need for the establishment of organised assemblies.

Much of the criticism that has been voiced about Church Growth's ecclesiology is applicable to the AFM in Africa too. Wilbert Shenk is concerned that the ecclesiology of the Church Growth Movement is an "underworked strand".<sup>922</sup> Johannes Verkuyl criticizes McGavran rightly, saying,

McGavran views the church solely from the perspective of her relationship to her Lord. But the church also has a posture towards the world which it must maintain, and this McGavran forgets."<sup>923</sup>

Conversely, Orlando Costas charged the Movement with a questionable theological "locus".<sup>924</sup> He believes that the Church Growth Movement has concentrated its efforts on ecclesiology and by so doing, it has made the church the

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<sup>922</sup>Shenk, op. cit., p.viii.

<sup>923</sup>Verkuyl, op. cit., p.192.

<sup>924</sup>Costas, 1974, op. cit., p.134.

"locus" of its theological reflection. This church-centered theology, mitigates "against the 'locus' of biblical theology: Christ".<sup>925</sup> Although ecclesiology is prominent in the New Testament, ecclesiocentricity is foreign to the Bible. George Peters warns,

As humanism is a general tendency of natural human beings, so ecclesiocentricity is a natural tendency of the church. Even missionary motivation, enthusiasm, and endeavor may be made subservient to this end and serve for the aggrandizement of the church.<sup>926</sup>

Certainly, the AFM in Africa is not guilty of that. Arthur Glasser is affirmative of the need of Church Growth to develop their ecclesiology, saying

Admittedly, we still have a long way to go, but you should know of recent developments wherein church growth perspectives have come to terms with contemporary ecclesiological insights from biblical theology and from the ecumenical debate.<sup>927</sup>

#### **Evangelistic Methodology:**

In our earlier discussion about the mission policy of the AFM, we argued that one of the significant factors contributing to their growth was their emphasis on evangelism.<sup>928</sup> We will now focus on their methodology.

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<sup>925</sup> Ibid., p.135.

<sup>926</sup> Peters, George W.: A Theology of Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981, p.45.

<sup>927</sup> Glasser, 1986, op. cit., p.411.

<sup>928</sup> See p.285

Nils Bloch-Hoell summed it up well when he said, "...on the whole Pentecostal missionary activity is strongly concentrated on evangelism".<sup>929</sup> Thomas Zimmerman, the former General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God describes the Pentecostals, saying,

The final characteristic of the early pentecostals which accounts for much of their success was their consuming evangelistic zeal. In spite of charges to the contrary, Pentecostals do not spend all their time talking in or about tongues. They have instead consistently sought to bring people to Christ.<sup>930</sup>

Certain catalytic factors enhance the success of Pentecostals' evangelism. Generally the Holy Spirit is regarded as the key factor in evangelism and church growth.<sup>931</sup> Secondly, Pentecostals

...give priority to Great Commission missions in the power of the Spirit, with an expectation of the Spirit's charismatic confirming ministry while concentrating on the receptive<sup>932</sup>

The receptive in this case would usually be the poor as has been shown already. A third factor is the eschatological

<sup>929</sup>Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., p.88.

<sup>930</sup>Zimmerman, Thomas F.: Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins, Vinson Synan, Editor, Logos, 1975, p.98.

<sup>931</sup>McGee, Gary B.: "Assemblies of God Mission Theology: A Historical Perspective", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol.10, No.4, Oct.1986, p.169.

<sup>932</sup>Pomerville, 1986, op. cit., p.152. He would define "Great-Commission mission" as the "mediated redemptive activity of God". See: Ibid., p.145.

urgency with which they evangelise.<sup>933</sup> Lastly, the result of their literal interpretation of scripture and task-oriented approach to world missions leads them to "biblical pragmatism".<sup>934</sup> They argue, "If it is scriptural and working, fine. If not, let's try something else".

Because of its compatibility, the major causes of the AFM in Africa's evangelistic success could easily be integrated in John Thomas Nichol's "causes for the initial success of Pentecostalism".<sup>935</sup> It would look like this:

- 1) A world conditioned to expect the supernatural.
- 2) Christians previously prepared to expect manifestations of the Spirit.
- 3) Emphasis upon experience rather than doctrine.
- 4) Their self-image as a revitalization movement within the Christian Church.
- 5) An early thrust toward nominal Christians and lethargic believers rather than to the unconverted. This is especially true of the white AFM.
- 6) An appeal to the lower strata of South African society.

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<sup>933</sup>Bloch-Hoell, op. cit., p.88.

<sup>934</sup>Pomerville, 1986, op. cit., p.152.

<sup>935</sup>Nichol, John Thomas: Pentecostalism. New York: Harper & Row, 1966, pp.54-69.



7) Taking initiative in going to people rather than waiting for them to come to them.

8) The use of mass meetings to create a sense of belonging to a community.

9) Emphasis upon divine healing.

10) Meeting the psychological felt-needs of people.

11) The conviction of early adherents that God had raised them up for a special work.

12) A tremendous spirit of sacrifice.<sup>936</sup>

The evangelistic methodology of the AFM in Africa is much the same as that used by Pentecostals worldwide. The AFM fervently believes that every Christian is called to be a witness and, upon receiving the gift of the Spirit, is empowered for service (Acts 1:8).<sup>937</sup> New Christians, who usually still have numerous connections with unbelieving friends and relatives, are taught to share their own personal experience of God's saving power with others. Believing that God is not limited to those leaders with college or doctoral degrees, lay-leaders (local preachers)

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<sup>936</sup> Barrett notes that, "Members are more harassed, persecuted, suffering, martyred than perhaps any other Christian tradition in recent history". See: Barrett, David B.: "The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal in the Holy Spirit, with Its Goal of World Evangelization", in International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Vol.12, No.3, July 1988, p.119.

<sup>937</sup> Handbook for the Native Section. op. cit., Policy, no.17.

are sent to open outstations, or also called branch-assemblies (preaching points) with the expectation that they will develop into churches. Most of the time they do. That high priority is given to the planting of branch-assemblies is illustrated by the fact that in 1980 the AFM in Africa had averagely almost two branch-assemblies for every established assembly. There were 424 established assemblies and 804 branch-assemblies in South Africa.<sup>938</sup> Most pastors begin their ministry as laymen in a local congregation, often by taking the responsibility for a branch-assembly, thereby also getting "on-the-job" training under the supervision of the local pastor. In 1980 there were 216 ordained pastors, and at the same time 234 fulltime laity.<sup>939</sup> Theological training will follow later via the Pan-African correspondence course, or fulltime at an in-residence bible school. Often there are organized efforts of house-to-house visitation by the members, both for the purpose of personal witness and for the distribution of appropriate literature.

Open air, street meetings are a common and fruitful practice, and attract new people to the churches. Vigorous mass evangelism programmes, especially tent evangelism is

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<sup>938</sup> Werkersraadverslag, available at AFM Archive, Lyndhurst, 1981, p.37.

<sup>939</sup> Ibid.

used by most districts. One district at one stage planted two to three churches every month. The evangelist travels to a new village with a pastor in training. After he has conducted a tent campaign for twenty days he leaves the village with a congregation of 80 - 120 people and a pastor.<sup>940</sup> It is unnecessary to say that in the AFM in Africa's methodology of evangelism the level of incorporation of the "newly won" into local congregations is high because the programmes are properly related to the local churches as an integral part of the evangelistic outreach itself.

Most Pentecostals would regard supernatural healing as an indispensable part of their evangelistic methodology. For example, Frodsham documents missionary Douglas Scott who said, "Every new work is opened on the ministry of Divine Healing, for without the supernatural it would be impossible to get any interest created in the gospel message..."<sup>941</sup> Anderson states,

The 'manifestations of the Spirit' other than speaking in tongues that were most widely reported<sup>942</sup> and endorsed by Pentecostals were miracles of healing.

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<sup>940</sup>Wimber, op. cit., pp.107-108.

<sup>941</sup>Frodsham, op. cit., p.91-92.

<sup>942</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p.93.

Wagner believes that the greatest contribution that Pentecostalism has made to Christianity in general is, "...restoring the reality of the miracle power of the New Testament."<sup>943</sup> Indeed, Wagner attributes the explosive growth of pentecostalism in Latin America to their successful healing campaigns.<sup>944</sup> Certainly Wagner would not claim that healing is the only reason for the Pentecostals rapid growth. While in most cases the church will grow when a sign or wonder occurs, this surely is not the only factor contributing to church growth.<sup>945</sup>

As has already been shown in chapter 2, numerous reports are documented in the history of the AFM of supernatural signs and wonders, especially healings.<sup>946</sup> There is little doubt that healing was and still is regarded as a positive "growth factor" in the history of the AFM in Africa.

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<sup>943</sup>Wagner, 1986, op. cit., p.128.

<sup>944</sup>Wagner, 1974, op. cit., p.124.

<sup>945</sup>In a study made in 1981, I came to the conclusion that signs and wonders, especially healing, are still occurring and most of the time churches are growing as a result of it. See:

De Wet, Chris R.: Signs and Wonders in Church Growth. Unpublished M.A. thesis at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, 1981.

<sup>946</sup>See p.71

In 1982, Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission, the home of the Church Growth Movement pioneered a course taught by John Wimber, called "Signs and Wonders and Church Growth". Although it was initially meant to be only an experimental class, it has now been taught four times to overflowing classrooms.<sup>947</sup>

An example of the reaction of the students was that of Dr. John White, a Canadian psychiatrist who enrolled for the course in winter 1984.

I had discovered I was trapped within what has been called a Western mind-set, a cultural bias that impeded my capacity to perceive supernatural phenomena. I believe that not only were demonic manifestations commoner than most evangelical Christians suppose, but that the Holy Spirit was at work in miraculous ways amongst the people of God. I also believe the kind of manifestations common in the Gospels and in the Acts should not be regarded as terminating with the death of the Apostles or the completion of the scriptural canon, but should be regarded as normative.<sup>948</sup>

Often the question is asked: Why the renewed interest in signs and wonders? The answer is more interesting when you take into account the ecclesiastical backgrounds of the faculty of the School of World Mission - United Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Mennonite, Brethren, United Methodist, reformed Presbyterian, Bible Church and others.

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<sup>947</sup>For more information about the course, see: Wagner, C. Peter (ed.): Signs and Wonders Today. Altamonte Springs, Fl.: Creation House, 1987.

<sup>948</sup>Wagner, 1984, op. cit., p.94.

Charles Kraft, professor of Intercultural Communications and African Studies, and former Missionary to Nigeria, writes,

My experience in Nigeria was that the people had difficulty understanding preachers who didn't heal and healers who didn't preach. These people perceived the works of healing as coming from divine power rather than from impersonal medicine.<sup>949</sup>

Kraft felt so strongly about the whole issue that he declared,

We desperately need to develop a theology of power in our school. In this day and age we no longer can maintain our integrity as a School of World Mission and send out people to minister in the Third World without first training them in how to pray for the sick.<sup>950</sup>

For Kraft, illness is a matter of theology, and not simply of medical understanding in virtually all cultures except those characterized by Western secularism. Donald McGavran says, "I do not come from a church background that emphasizes healing. In fact we have been a bit critical of it." After much research, he now says,

The evidence I uncovered in country after country - and in North America as well - simply wouldn't permit me to hold my former point of view. And I may say that as I meditated on it,<sup>951</sup> my biblical conviction also wouldn't permit it.

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<sup>949</sup> Kraft, Charles: Christian Life Magazine. Wheaton, Ill., October 1982, p.65

<sup>950</sup> Ibid., p.48

<sup>951</sup> Wagner, 1983, op. cit., p.131

To put the interest in the supernatural at Fuller in the right perspective, Wagner honestly admits,

While the missions faculty is enthusiastic over the emphasis on the supernatural, we do not want to be naive. Substantial exegetical and empirical studies need to be made in the subject of supernatural activity.<sup>952</sup>

However, because tension developed within the faculty of Fuller, a faculty task force was named, chaired by theology professor Lewis Smedes, to work through the issues raised by the course. In November 1986, the task force produced a document, titled Ministry and the Miraculous, that was accepted by the joint faculty.<sup>953</sup>

The statement wrestles with biblical and theological issues relating to the kingdom of God. It describes how signs and wonders were part of the ministry of the early church. It considers worldview and the reality of the demonic alongside the activities of God in creation and in nature. It recognizes the place of suffering in the Christian life and deals with how miraculous healing is handled pastorally, especially when God does not choose to heal at a particular time. It speaks of the need for feeding the poor and of social justice. It warns against counterfeit miracles and calls for biblical discernment.<sup>954</sup>

President and professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, David A. Hubbard partly explains the interest in the miraculous at Fuller, saying,

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<sup>952</sup>Ibid., p.48

<sup>953</sup>This was published:  
Smedes, Lewis B.(ed.): Ministry and the Miraculous.  
Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987.

<sup>954</sup>Wagner, 1987, op. cit., p.9.

Life at the frontiers of missions frequently puts Christ's servants in places where they confront the forces of evil and need a power beyond their own. To engage in such conflict with intellectual equipment or doctrine alone, as vital as that is, may not be sufficient. They need all that the Holy Spirit is for the challenge they wage against the secular pagan or demonic forces which seek to limit their effectiveness as Christians and to block the spreading of the gospel.<sup>955</sup>

Clearly not everyone within the School of World Mission is as enthusiastic about signs and wonders as Wagner and Kraft. Arthur Glasser says "No one argues that God does not heal the sick", but he refuses to

concede that any preaching of the gospel which does not include 'signs and wonders' is somehow sub-biblical. The gospel itself is 'the power of God unto salvation,' and to proclaim this is power evangelism par excellence.<sup>956</sup>

David Bosch entered the early debate saying,

I do not deny the reality and the right place for signs and wonders in church growth. What I do question is the suggestion that this is the normal way God has chosen to work and that it will deliver the desired results - in other words: the kind of conversion the gospel talks about.<sup>957</sup>

Writing about the future of Evangelical missions from North America in the years ahead, Harvie Conn believes that one of the issues that "can easily dominate the agenda because of its importance and potential for divisiveness and drama", is the question of "signs and wonders, of healing

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<sup>955</sup> Smedes, (ed.), op. cit., p.14.

<sup>956</sup> Glasser, 1986, op. cit., p.415.

<sup>957</sup> Bosch, 1988, op. cit., pp.22-23.



ministries and their relation to church growth".<sup>958</sup> Conn asks the question, "What will we do with it? I anticipate a very enthusiastic discussion when it begins to emerge. But it is still too early to comment."<sup>959</sup>

Although a theological evaluation of healing falls outside the scope of this thesis, there are a few observations that ought to be made in order to fully understand the sociological and psychological reasons for the impact it has on black people. Black Africans have a presupposition about sickness that is quite foreign to the Western worldview.

"Disease comes as a punishment for wrongdoing. Watchful ancestral spirits punish wrongdoers with illness or other misfortune. Also, illness can be the result of sorcery or witchcraft, which usually results from strained interpersonal relationships. Most of the time Western medicine only deals with the physical or symptomatic aspects of illness. It never deals with the cause."<sup>960</sup>

MacRobert amplifies the above by quoting Gayroud Wilmore who states

The native religions of West and Central Africa had a single dominating characteristic...a profound belief that both the individual and the community had a continues involvement with the spirit world in the practical affairs of daily life. African primal religions integrate the seen and the unseen world. The supernatural, sacred, metaphysical and spiritual are merged with and influence the natural, profane,

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<sup>958</sup> Conn, Harvie M.: "Looking at the Future: Evangelical Missions from North America in the Years Ahead", in Urban Mission, January 1988, pp.30-31.

<sup>959</sup> Ibid.

<sup>960</sup> De Wet, 1981, op. cit., p.99.

physical and material.<sup>961</sup>

Black worldview sees the world holistically.<sup>962</sup> They are constantly living in fear of evil spirits. Therefore the fear among traditionalists is most evidenced in times of sickness. When they are prayed for and are healed, it means much more to them than only a physical blessing. It is also a spiritual victory. For them, Christ becomes "Christus Victor".<sup>963</sup>

Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman stress,

In Africa particularly the missionary's pastoral care must lay great stress on the total victory of Christ over all evil powers. Turner found, after listening to hundreds of sermons in the independent churches, that the main emphasis was always on Christ's total victory on Golgotha over all demons (Col.2:15).

J. Stanley Friesen reflects in his study of Indigenous movements, that for the African, "Salvation is seen more in terms of health and wholeness and freedom and deliverance from spiritual powers and beings."<sup>964</sup>

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<sup>961</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>962</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>963</sup> Aulen, Gustav: Christus Victor. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1937.

<sup>964</sup> Friesen, J. Stanley: "The Significance of Indigenous Movements for the Study of Church Growth" in The Challenge of Church Growth. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1973, p. 103

Anderson observes,

The Pentecostal attitude toward sickness and healing grew out of an underlying animistic outlook so thoroughgoing that it came close at times to being a total explanation for human behaviour.....Indeed the common denominator of the two most prominent features of the Pentecostal Movement - tongues and healing - was this animistic philosophy. Both involved the invasion and control of the individual by a foreign spirit. In tongue-speaking the Holy Spirit was the agent; in sickness, evil spirits. Healing was a process of driving out the evil spirits through the greater power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>965</sup>

The tremendous growth of the African Independent Churches (AIC) in Africa has made it impossible for Western missions to ignore them. AIC specialist, M.L. Daneel agrees in his study of them that although this is not the only reason,

...no single factor has been mentioned more often by members of the Spirit-type churches as the direct reason for their joining these movements, than the healing treatment performed by African prophets.<sup>966</sup>

African Jackson Mutie Munyao highlights the need for the restoration of a ministry of healing in missions when he tells,

A lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the Westerners has led many Christians in Africa to backslide. They could not understand how something extremely easy for the witchdoctor - such as casting out of demons - was virtually impossible for the learned missionary. When the missionaries could not help them in these issues, the people went back to the

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<sup>965</sup> Anderson, op. cit., pp.95-96.

<sup>966</sup> Daneel, M.L.: Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1974, p. 186

witchdoctors in secret. After they had received healing from the witchdoctors, they would offer a sacrifice to the pagan gods, then attend church the next day. To Africans, the physical body means a lot. They will pay anything to receive healing, even if it means abandoning their Christianity.

Hollenweger agrees that "prayer for the sick is of particular importance in the African and Latin-American churches".<sup>967</sup> The treatment of illness as practiced by Europeans is scarcely acceptable to many of them, even if they cannot explain in our terms what prevents them from accepting it. Hollenweger explains why, saying,

European medicine seems to them to be a new and worse magic, which claims to be able to overcome the tragedy of sickness but which in fact isolates the body from the soul with the tools of modern science.<sup>968</sup>

Hollenweger's logic conclusion is that in

these circumstances a responsible integration of academic medicine (including psychiatry) and the African practice of hypnotherapy (healing by hypnosis) with healing through prayer is an urgent necessity.<sup>969</sup>

Willem Saayman of the University of South Africa, would agree with Hollenweger, for he has said:

I think that the church, especially in Africa, has seriously neglected its healing ministry by leaving it too much in the hands of 'scientific' medicine alone.<sup>970</sup>

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<sup>967</sup> Hollenweger, Walter J.: "Charismatic Renewal in the Third World: Implications for Missions", in International Bulletin for Missionary Research, April 1980, p.70.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid.

<sup>970</sup> Saayman, W.A.: "The Church Growth Movement: An  
(Footnote Continued)

Wilbert Schenk in examining the missiological implications of the kingdom for the church, shows that one implication is that "Jesus preached and healed".<sup>971</sup> Through preaching Jesus explained the meaning of the kingdom. By healing them Jesus demonstrated the power of the kingdom over death and evil and pointed to the time when shalom would be experienced. Schenk concludes that the "missionary witness to the kingdom of God must always include both the word preached and the word demonstrated".<sup>972</sup> MacRobert makes a vital point, saying that there are

some elements in the Bible which could be interpreted in terms of African religion and thus provide a continuity of belief and practice. The Scriptures speak of miracles, the exorcism of demons, the defeat of Satan and the granting of the Spirit's power to believers that they might do such things.<sup>973</sup>

Pentecostalism with its practice of Spirit baptism, healing and exorcism, certainly provides such a continuity of belief and practice.

Undoubtedly there are unanswered theological, missiological, psychological and pastoral questions in this

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(Footnote Continued)

Appropriate Challenge? - A response to Chris de Wet, in Missionalia. Missionalia: Pretoria, Vol. 14 No. 2, Aug. 1986, p. 102.

<sup>971</sup>Shenk, Wilbert R.: "Kingdom, Mission, and Growth", in Exploring Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, p. 214.

<sup>972</sup>Ibid.

<sup>973</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p. 16.

regard that still need further research. Questions like, is the ministry of healing primarily to provide answers to medical problems, or is it to be understood as a sign of the present reality of the kingdom of God? Are the signs which attended our Lord's ministry intended to confirm His unique Sonship and Messiahship, or do they characterize the ministry of every Spirit-filled person through whom the present reality of the kingdom is to be demonstrated? Is it God's intention to heal everyone and what is the theological explanation for healing withheld from a person who has come in faith to receive the ministry of healing? How do we minister pastorally to such a person when, following the ministry for healing, his or her physical or mental condition continues to deteriorate? What influence can demons have over the lives of believers? But, also important is, what is our response to mature believers from the Two-Thirds World, for whom the existence of the demonic and the reality of "signs and wonders" is a fact of life rather than a subject for debate?

One would make, however, a grave error in underestimating the important role, then, that healing has played as a positive growth factor in the AFM in Africa. Indeed, as it was and still is in the growth of the African Independent Churches.

That the evangelistic methodology of the AFM in Africa enhanced their growth is clear. However, tabel 1 reveals that not all districts are growing. Their AAGR for the decade 1970-1980 ranges from 0% to 30%.<sup>974</sup> The AAGR of the AFM in Africa for the period, 1920-1980, is only 5,4%.<sup>975</sup> Over the decade 1970-1980 the AAGR is a little better, 17,4%. The AFM in Africa would be wise to take notice of the following adverse factors that possibly worked negatively on their evangelism. Firstly, more attention will have to be given to an urban evangelism strategy.<sup>976</sup> Secondly, unreached groups, like black rural farm workers, refugees, migrant workers etc. must be identified and evangelised. Thirdly, the AFM in Africa has to watch out for the burning desire of respectibility. There is nothing wrong with ecclesiastical respectibility, just as long as the AFM in Africa does not water down Pentecostal distinctives of doctrine or practice. Fourthly, more new pastors will have to be trained. Graph 13 shows clearly that the pastoral work force is not keeping up with the numerical growth of assemblies.<sup>977</sup> Fifthly, more attention will have to be given to accurate statistics in order to evaluate ongoing

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<sup>974</sup>See P.248

<sup>975</sup>See the statistical report of the AFM in Africa, p.247

<sup>976</sup>See p.274

<sup>977</sup>See: p.298

growth/decline patterns. Sixthly, in order for a holistic view of missions more attention must be given to social responsibilities, that have been seriously neglected up till now. Seventhly, more goal-oriented planning must be done. Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman believe that

The most significant thought that emerges from the Church Growth School - under the influence of management science - is that specific goals must be set which are capable of functioning directly as well as evaluatively. All too often mission work in the past was unplanned and was never evaluated. One simply trod the beaten track - with or without success, with good or poor results. And criticism of poor results was tantamount to blasphemy, since it was 'God who led us in this way'.<sup>978</sup>

Lastly, to evangelize more effectively, the responsive "segments" must be identified. Because we are advocating Church Growth methodology in this regard, we will also deal with the criticism against this approach. The late seventies saw the emergence of a new approach in the evangelical Lausanne movement, known as the "people approach".<sup>979</sup> Such a people group is defined as a significant number of people who regard themselves as a sociological group. The cohesive factor may be language, religion, ethnicity, domicile, occupation, class, situation or a combination of any of them. The whole purpose of this definition and approach is to find a group of realistic size which may form an

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<sup>978</sup>Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman, op. cit., p.153.

<sup>979</sup>Ibid., p. 148.



effective target for evangelism. So the first step in the analysis of a target area or environment would be to identify the "possible people" group or groups that we want to reach with the gospel. It is important to take note of the groups for very likely each group will have to be approached differently because of the differences in their cultural background, structures and needs. The Church Growth people speak of "people blindness" and "cultural myopia" when a church neglects to do this. This is not the propagation of the Homogeneous Unit Principle, but to identify a "people group" is merely a diagnostic tool to help in more goal and need orientated evangelism. Of course there is the danger again of exclusiveness.

The Church Growth Movement also believes that conversion does not necessarily have to be an individual decision, but can be a multi-individual, mutually interdependent conversion. This they call people movements.<sup>980</sup> Tippet states categorically that "the structure of this movement is multi-individual, not mass-movement".<sup>981</sup> Ebbie Smith describes a people movement as,

a joint expression of a series of multi-individual mutually interdependent conversions. This strategy

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<sup>980</sup> Smith, 1984, op. cit., p.68.

<sup>981</sup> Tippet, Alan R.: Church Growth and the Word of God. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, p.31.

speaks more to how decisions to become Christian are expressed than to the process of conversion itself. The joint expression opens the doors for a culturally acceptable and approved way to express commitment to Christ.<sup>982</sup>

Martin Goldsmith makes the valid observation, that in the excessively individualistic cultures of the West we may dislike the term "group movement", but it remains true that in many cultures people can make decisions together as groups without losing individual personal integrity.<sup>983</sup>

McGavran believes that the chief resistance of Islam and other religions is social and not theological.<sup>984</sup> Because of this, Church Growth people are excited about the ability of people movements to almost totally bypass social and cultural barriers to salvation.

Many people are deeply suspicious about people movements, believing them to lead to nominal Christianity. John Young is one who argues,

History is replete with illustrations of such movements with minimal discipling building shallow churches, with faith becoming syncretistic and then dying away. From the Constantinian movement, to the mass conversions of the central plains of Asia, the tribes of the Kerites, Onguss, and Ugars, to the Roman Catholic conversions

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<sup>982</sup>Smith, 1984, op. cit., p.69.

<sup>983</sup>Goldsmith, op. cit., p.43.

<sup>984</sup>McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.317.

of southern Japan such illustrations exists.<sup>985</sup>

Goldsmith acknowledges that without good follow-up teaching, nominalism can ensue. However, nominal Christianity is not the result of either individual conversion patterns or of group movements; it comes from a lack of spirituality, teaching, and fellowship in the church.<sup>986</sup>

David Shenk argues that in some situations this approach might be counter-productive.<sup>987</sup> For example Shenk mentions the people group in Tanzania who became part of the church at the moment when they caught the vision of the new universal community, which could link their tiny ethnic group into worldwide fellowship. "It was the quest for universality, not locality, which was the trigger for church growth".<sup>988</sup> Secondly, overemphasizing ethnic identity is perceived by many emerging nations as being treasonable. Thirdly, some of the most responsive peoples to the gospel are those who have broken out of the trappings of ethnicity.

The modern emphasis on individualism is prying people loose from traditional loyalties and opening them to the possibilities of involvement and commitment to other forms of community. For those modern

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<sup>985</sup>Young, John M.L.: "The Place and Importance of Numerical Church Growth" in Theological Perspectives on Church Growth. Phillipsburg, NJ.: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1976, p.69.

<sup>986</sup>Goldsmith, op. cit., p.44.

<sup>987</sup>Shenk, op. cit., pp.151-152.

<sup>988</sup>Ibid.

individualists the church often provides a welcome home.<sup>989</sup>

Fourthly, A people-group orientation sometimes overlooks the broad commonalities which link, for example, all Muslims together. A fixation on local cultural apparatus may obscure their amazingly consistent worldview. "The people-group emphasis tempts us to sidestep the universal theological nature of the encounter and witness".<sup>990</sup>

Priority should be given to those who are most receptive to the gospel. McGavran calls this "winning the winnable while they are winnable".<sup>991</sup> One of the major scientific contributions that the Church Growth Movement has made toward the practice of evangelism, is the resistance-receptivity theory. The resistance-receptivity theory postulates that at a given point in time certain people groups, families, and individuals will be more receptive to the message of the Gospel than others.<sup>992</sup> George Hunter, calls it "The Church Growth Movement's

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<sup>989</sup> Ibid.

<sup>990</sup> Ibid.

<sup>991</sup> McGavran, 1970, op. cit., p.256.

<sup>992</sup> Wagner, 1981, op. cit., p.77.

greatest contribution to this generation's world evangelization".<sup>993</sup>

In the light of this theory, Wagner argues,

Since resources of time, personal, talent, money, and energy are all limited, decisions have to be made as to where they can best be used. This necessarily involves setting priorities. Although God can and does intervene and indicate otherwise, it only makes good sense to direct the bulk of the available resources to the areas where the greatest numbers are likely to become disciples of Jesus Christ.<sup>994</sup>

The resistant are not to be neglected or bypassed, but they are to be held lightly.

Although one can clearly see the positive value of this theory, conversely one is also aware of certain inherent danger that it facilitates. Wilbert Schenk, a former missionary who worked amongst Muslims believes that "frequently this emphasis skews resources away from Islamized peoples."<sup>995</sup> Schenk recognizes the biblical command to shake the dust from our feet and go elsewhere when people reject the gospel, but, "most Muslims have never explicitly rejected the gospel". He continues his argument with a point worth taking note off, saying "Their apparent resistance is

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<sup>993</sup>Hunter III, George G.: The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979, p.104.

<sup>994</sup>Wagner, 1981, op. cit., pp.77-78.

<sup>995</sup>Schenk, op. cit., p.152.

usually related to the fact that they have never understood its message".<sup>996</sup> Thus, there always exists the possibility of mistakingly branding people as resistant while this is incorrect. This is a very valid point bearing in mind the past record of western missionaries' proclaiming of a "western clothed culture-Christianity". Methods of "soil testing" to determine whether people are resistant or receptive to the gospel will have to be evaluated regularly, in order not to inadvertently make grave mistakes.

If the AFM in Africa will correct the eight factors we have mentioned, their evangelistic efforts will certainly result in even more church growth.

#### Church Facilities:

Whether the possession of a church building helps or hinders church growth in the African context will be hard to prove. Frank Chikane states that a number of AFM in Africa churches "started mostly from houses and under trees, in some instances in rural areas".<sup>997</sup>

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<sup>996</sup> Ibid.

<sup>997</sup> Chikane, op. cit., p.31.

The AIC are a good example of one of the fastest growing church movements, yet they meet in rented school halls, in the open veld, under trees, in homes etc. Logically a too small facility can definitely hinder growth. We have reason to suspect that this is the case with many of the AFM in Africa's assemblies.<sup>998</sup> Graph 13 reveals what we believe to be the most significant reason for this. While white district councils have spend R1,3 million on white missionaries during the five year period of 1974 to 1979, only R440962 were spend on black pastors and building projects. Analizing it even further, of this amount only R64084 was spent on building projects and church sites.<sup>999</sup> In 1980 the 424 assemblies (not including the 804 branch-assemblies) had only 231 church buildings.<sup>1000</sup>

#### Liturgy of the AFM in Africa:

The liturgy of the AFM in Africa can undoubtedly be regarded as one of its major growth factors because of its appeal to Blacks. The distinctive character of the liturgy of the AFM in Africa, and that of Pentecostals in general,

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<sup>998</sup> Gschwend, Edgar: Circular received from him in Jun. 1988.

<sup>999</sup> Study done in Oct. 1980. Information acquired at AFM headquarters, Lyndhurst.

<sup>1000</sup> Werkersraadverslag: 1981, p.37. Available from AFM Archive, Lyndhurst.

as well as its appeal to Blacks can directly be contributed to four major factors.

Firstly, a major factor influencing Pentecostal liturgy decisively, is their black (African) roots.<sup>1001</sup> MacRobert correctly believes that the birth in 1906 of the Pentecostal movement "owes much to this black syncretised Christianity and to black spirituality".<sup>1002</sup> Hollenweger agrees with MacRobert and summarised the black roots of Pentecostalism as follows: orality of liturgy; narrativity of theology and witness; maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making; inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship; an understanding of the body/mind relationship which is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind, well illustrated by the ministry of healing by prayer.<sup>1003</sup> When one evaluates the religious background of Seymour, a key figure in early Pentecostalism, you find his religion was primarily oral in its liturgy and theology: expressed in the story, the shout, the song, the dance and other distinctively African motor behaviour, to the accompaniment

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<sup>1001</sup>For a comprehensive discussion of the black roots of Pentecostalism, see: MacRobert, Iain: The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA. New York: St Martin's Press, 1988

<sup>1002</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>1003</sup>Hollenweger, 1982, op. cit., pp.405-406.



of the polyrhythmic clapping of hands, stamping of feet and swaying of bodies.<sup>1004</sup> Although the pneumatology differs between the spirit possession of African primal folk religion and the Spirit baptism of black Pentecostalism,<sup>1005</sup> the music and motor behaviour associated with it display considerable evidence of continuity. MacRobert convincingly shows that two reports of events at Azusa, both written by detractors, amply illustrate that the type of behaviour taking place at Azusa, was a continuity between West African folk religion, black Christianity and early Pentecostalism.<sup>1006</sup>

Not only did the motor behaviour of the participants reveal the early Pentecostal movement's debt to African folk religion, but the leitmotive of black Christianity, which had their origins either in Africa or in slavery, continued to echo in early black inspired Pentecostalism: Spirit possession and spiritual power (accompanied by trances, dreams, prophesying, healing and exorcism); the integration of the seen and the unseen worlds; freedom; racial equality; black personhood and dignity; community<sup>1007</sup> and belief in the imminent Second Advent of Christ.

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<sup>1004</sup>For a comprehensive study about Seymour, see: Nelson, Douglas J.: For Such a Time as This: the Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, May 1981.

<sup>1005</sup>The pneumatology differs between the spirit possession of African primal folk religion and the Spirit baptism or "getting the Spirit" of Pentecostalism. See: MacRobert, op. cit., pp.91-92.

<sup>1006</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., pp.78-79.

<sup>1007</sup>Ibid., p.79.

The fact that Pentecostalism echoes this familiar leitmotif, must undoubtedly be regarded as the key to the attraction of Pentecostalism for Blacks.

A second factor contributing to the appeal and character of Pentecostal liturgy is Pentecostals' emphasis on the experiential.<sup>1008</sup> Not only was the Pentecostal movement especially attractive to Blacks because it unashamedly reflected the leitmotif of black religion, but as the mainline churches moved away from experiential religion, their black members became increasingly alienated. Pentecostals had what they were longing for: total involvement of mind, body and emotions in unrestrained worship. The early Pentecostal movement was primarily an event or experience movement rather than an idea or philosophical one. "The early Pentecostals were seeking for experiences of pneumatic power".<sup>1009</sup> Their experience with the Spirit lifted them out of the mundane into "ecstatic" consciousness of God's presence, power and love. MacRobert believes that

The black Pentecostal, like the African, used music and rhythm as a means of attuning himself to the Spirit -

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<sup>1008</sup>The reader should be aware that Pentecostalism's emphasis on Christian experience is dramatically different from that of existential theology. The crucial difference is that for Pentecostals the hermeneutical horizon (the authoritative starting point) for theologizing is not human experience or a philosophical position but Scripture.

<sup>1009</sup>MacRobert, op. cit., p.86.

as a vehicle for the power of God. Thus possessed by the Spirit, the black Pentecostal sang and danced in the celebration of life in the same way as his parents and grandparents had done during slavery, and in ways his ancestors would have recognised in West Africa.<sup>1010</sup>

Melvin Hodges states that Pentecostals "expect God to supernaturally invade ordinary worship and service by His presence and power. When His presence and power are not felt, they are missed".<sup>1011</sup> Pomerville is adamant that Pentecostalism brings a dimension of the Christian faith to light which has all but been eclipsed in Western Christianity - the experiential dimension.<sup>1012</sup> For Pentecostal theologian Russell P. Spittler

it seems likely that much Pentecostal success in mission can be laid to their drive for personal religious experience, their evangelistic demand for decision, the experiential particularism involved in every Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal preaching is a call to personal experience with God - nothing less.<sup>1013</sup>

One would also assume that by Pentecostal's practice to stress the conversion experience rather than religious instruction, Christianity was made more accessible to the illiterate and poorly educated Blacks.

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<sup>1010</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>1011</sup> Hodges, Melvin L.: Spiritual Gifts. Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1964, p.1.

<sup>1012</sup> Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>1013</sup> Spittler, op. cit., p.413.

A third major factor making Pentecostal liturgy inviting to Blacks, is its cultural relevancy. Pentecostalism can rightly be regarded as a correction to the sterile and culturally unfamiliar liturgical forms of the mainline churches. These "unfamiliar" liturgical forms certainly stem out of the

excessive impact of western culture on the theology brought by the missionary to non-western cultures resulted in an extremely naturalistic, rationalistic, and abstract-oriented theological product being introduced into supernaturalistic, intuitive, and concrete-oriented societies.<sup>1014</sup>

Ngoni Sengwe, once a member of an AIC, believes correctly that the AIC movement arose out of a clash between western culture and African culture, and not out of a clash between the gospel and African culture.<sup>1015</sup> Sengwe is convinced that the "direct destruction of the African world view and society" are due to "its contact with western missions".<sup>1016</sup> Due to the impact of the Enlightenment in western culture, with its emphasis on a rational, word-oriented faith, this faith was ill prepared to understand and empathize with African culture. Pomerville accentuates that "it was also ill prepared to respond to African culture biblically in presenting the supernatural as represented by New Testament

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<sup>1014</sup>Pomerville, 1985, op. cit., p.74.

<sup>1015</sup>Ibid., p.28.

<sup>1016</sup>Ibid.

theology and pneumatology".<sup>1017</sup> It is exactly in this regard that Pentecostalism provided a return to the

holistic, non-rational, miraculous, supernatural, experiential, emotive, oral, narrative, communitarian and participatory religion which overcomes the alienation which results when man exists in a society or culture which denies essential parts of his being.<sup>1018</sup>

In fact, Pentecostalism can be regarded as a counter-culture replacing the dichotomous or naturalistic worldview of the West with the holistic integrated worldview of Africa (which was not so different from that of pre-enlightenment Europe). "The sacred and the profane which were totally integrated in the holistic world view of West Africa were also integrated in black Pentecostalism".<sup>1019</sup> Indeed, the discovery of an expression of Christianity which spoke to the needs of the African in his cultural context and provided Christian means for dealing with the spirit world, became the impetus for many Blacks to join Pentecostal and Pentecostal type (AIC) churches.

A fourth factor contributing to Pentecostal's liturgical attractiveness to Blacks, is the spontaneity found in Pentecostal services. Frederick Bruner states

The Pentecostal church meeting has been described as pew-centered and the description is apt. In contrast to

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<sup>1017</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>1018</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.86.

<sup>1019</sup> MacRobert, op. cit., p.90.

generally pulpit-centred Protestantism and altar-centred Catholicism, Pentecostalism finds its centre in the believing community.<sup>1020</sup>

Although this is true, the liturgical leadership provided from the pulpit during a Pentecostal service must not be underplayed. Understandably, the mix of spontaneity with the unpredictable, sometimes uncontrolled urges of the Spirit calls for the best resources of pastoral guidance. Members expect anyone of the local assembly to follow the Spirit's leading and to do so at once. Spontaneous witnessing, functioning of the charismata, prayers, singing, shouting, clapping hands, leaping, and dancing before the Lord as they offer Him sincere praise and thanksgiving are all part of black Pentecostals' services.

The four factors we have discussed graphically illustrate the reasons why the liturgy of the AFM in Africa can be regarded as a major growth promoting factor.

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<sup>1020</sup> Bruner, op. cit., p.132.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In our study we have shown that the AFM in Africa is part of the modern day classical Pentecostal Movement which originated early in the 20th Century. Pentecostals regard the Movement as a renewal of the Holy Spirit first and foremost, and only secondly is it a human effort to reinstitute a neglected apostolic orientation within the contemporary church. Although Pentecostals ascribe their origin to God, unique ecclesiastical, religious and social factors have clearly contributed to the emergence of the Pentecostal Movement. Of particular significance for our study is the "black roots" of the Pentecostal Movement. Preparatory factors for Pentecostalism in South Africa were the revival starting in 1860, the ministry of Andrew Murray, the Christian Zionist Movement, and the "poor-white" problem after the Anglo-Boer War. American missionaries, in particular John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch were instrumental in the establishment of the AFM in May 1908.

The history of the AFM in Africa, traced from 1908 - 1980, portrays a black church struggling to be born and come of age. Events in its history were dealt with chronologically, and when a major theme was found it was developed fully before returning to that chronological point. This proved to be very difficult and confusing

because of the overlapping of dates. Therefore, themes were only dealt with chronologically as far as were possible.

Similar to early Pentecostalism in the USA, meetings in the AFM were initially multiracial, but as soon as the movement became institutionalised it conformed to the racial practices of the day by organizing racially segregated meetings and eventually churches. The development of segregation in Pentecostalism in the USA and South Africa was examined and striking similarities were found. The relationship between the AFM and the State proved to be one of reverence and respect most of the time. Although the AFM professed to be apolitical, this certainly was not the case with its white executive leadership. From the AFM's inception specific political stances were taken and political pronouncements were documented.

The statistical excursus of the AFM in Africa for the period 1908 - 1980, proved that they undoubtedly grew numerically. It is unfortunate that no workable, reliable set of statistics of actual church members of the AFM in Africa is available. It is essential that the AFM in Africa give attention to this in future. The Church Growth evaluation of the numerical growth of the AFM in Africa revealed decisive contextual and institutional factors helping and hindering their church growth.



Significant growth factors were firstly, their prioritization of evangelism accompanied with an emphasis on the supernatural manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. Secondly, the laity played a decisive role in the growth and development of the AFM in Africa. Thirdly, their theology of missions reveals a distinctive pneumatology that provided the Christian means for black Africans to deal with the spirit world. Their theology of missions also showed that their eschatological urgency and sense of divine destiny added to their missionary zeal. A fourth growth factor was their ecclesiology. The fact that the AFM regarded itself for the biggest part of its existence as a "mission" rather than a "church", enhanced their evangelistic and missionary fervour. Fifthly, undoubtedly one of the AFM in Africa's most significant growth factors is their liturgy. Contributing to this are the black (African) roots of Pentecostalism, making Pentecostalism culturally very relevant. In fact, it can be said that Pentecostalism replaced the dichotomous worldview of the West with the holistic worldview of Africa. The emphasis on the experiential in their religion and spontaneity in their meetings made the AFM in Africa's liturgy even more attractive to Blacks. Sixthly, the homogeneous groupings of Blacks in the "Homelands" made evangelism and church planting easier. The migration of black people from the rural areas to the "Homelands" probably made them more responsive to the gospel.

A significant factor hindering the church growth of the AFM in Africa, was the superpaternalistic approach to mission of the white "Mother-church". This seriously weakened the development of black leadership. Our evaluation of the growth of the AFM in Africa has also revealed some factors that both helped and hindered their church growth. A study of the indigeneity of the AFM in Africa showed that they were strong in their self-propagating, but weak in the areas of finances and decision-making. The government's policy of "apartheid" helped the growth of the AFM in Africa in that the homogeneous groupings made evangelism and church planting easier. However, the AFM's endorsement of this policy certainly harmed their witness and credibility especially among the younger black generation. The same could be said about their lack of prophetic witness towards the government. History alone will determine the damage that was done to the dignity of Blacks in the AFM in Africa.

Although the rapid urbanization of Blacks ought to help the growth of the AFM in Africa, it is clearly not as effective as it ought to be in their urban missions. The widening gap between the growth in new assemblies and new pastors trained for the ministry will also have to be addressed.

The history of the AFM in Africa showed some distinctive factors adding to their church growth. But,

conversely there are also negative factors that must be addressed without delay. The AFM in Africa clearly possesses all the qualities necessary to be a positive impact-making force for the kingdom of God and to reveal the revolutionary potential of the family of God.

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## APPENDIX 1.: "Onze Naturelle Gedraglijn"

1. Dat aanstelling in het Naturelle Werk als volgt zullen zijn:- De Europese Superintendent en zijn Assistenten die het Algemene Toezicht over het werk zullen houden. Zendings Overzieners die aangesteld zullen worden om zekere distrikten te besturen en aan de Algemene Superintendent of zijn Assistenten verantwoordelijk zullen zijn. Ouderlingen, Evangelisten, Diakenen en plaatselijke Predikers die het werk in de verschillende gemeenten zullen voorzetten en verantwoordelijk zullen zijn aan de Zendings Overzieners, of zo hun Gemeenten nog niet binnen de grenzen zijn van een Zendings Overzieners Distrikt, aan de Algemene Superintendent of zijn Assistenten. Het Zendings Komitee dat aangesteld is door de Uitvoerende Raad en dat lichaam vertegenwoordigd, hetwelk het Opperste Gezaghebbend Lichaam van de Zending is, zal het werk besturen door de Algemene Superintendent en zal verantwoordelijk zijn aan de Uitvoerende Raad voor het behoorlijke uitvoeren van het werk.

2. Dat een Jaarlijkse Konferentie gehouden zal worden van alle Naturelle Predikers die in Konferentie bijeen zullen komen met de Algemene Superintendent zijn Assistenten, Zendings Overzieners en Leden van het Zendings Komitee.

3. Aanbevelingen zullen door deze Konferentie gedaan worden aangaande Algemene Aanstelling betreffende het Naturelle Werk zoals Algemene Superintendent van Naturelle Werk en Assistent Superintendenten daarvan. Zulke aanbevelingen zullen dan door het Zendings Komitee overwogen worden, en zal dit komitee macht tot handelen hebben.

4. De Naturelle Konferentie zal voor ogen houden het eventuele onderverdelen van het Land in Distrikten elk onder een Zendings Overziener. De grenzen van zulke distrikten zullen bepaald worden wanneer zij ten volle bewerkt zijn en door elkander beginnen te lopen.

5. De Zendings Overzieners zullen alles in hun vermogen doen om het werk uit te breiden en te bevestigen in hun distrikten en in zulke aangrenzende landstreken als tot nog toe onbewerkt zijn en zullen verantwoordelijk zijn voor het uitvoeren van het werk zoals aangegeven in 'Voorschriften aan Onze Zendelingen.'

6. Dat een Godvrezende gedraglijn gevolgd worden zal in zake alle Aanstellingen en Verordeningen tot de Bediening. Dat het de Algemene Regel zal zijn alleen dezulken in te zegenen tot de Bediening die getrouw en waarachtig als Diakenen of Plaatselijke Predikers gediend hebben en duidelijk door de Heilige Geest geroepen zijn.

7. Dat alle Verordeningen tot de Bediening als Leraars geschieden zal door de Algemene Superintendent, zijn Assistenten en Overzieners, jaarliks, tijdens de Naturelle Konferentie.

8. Dat geen Verordening van enige man binnen het Distrikt van een Zending Overziener geschieden zal dan uitsluitend op aanbeveling van zulk Zendings Overziener die de Plaatselijke Gemeente, waartoe zodanig persoon aangesteld staat te worden, geraadpleegd zal hebben. Dat de namen van zulke kandidaten voor de Bediening, goedgekeurd zijnde door de Algemene Superintendent en Zendings Overziener, voor de Naturelle Konferentie ter goedkeuring geplaatst zal worden.

9. Dat tussen de Konferenties Voorlopige Aanstellingen tot de Bediening geschieden kunnen door de Algemene Superintendent op aanbeveling van de Zendings Overzieners, zulke aanstellingen te komen voor de eerstvolgende Konferentie ter goedkeuring en de kandidaten ter Verordening indien goedgekeurd.

10. Dat de voorgaande handelwijze in zake Aanstelling en Verordening van Leeraars ook gevolgd worden zal voor Diakenen en Plaatselijke Predikers behalve dat zij voor hun verschillende Distrikt Konferenties gebracht zullen worden en dat indien de Algemene Superintendent of zijn Assistenten onvermijdelijk afwezig zijn, de Plaatselijke Zendings Overziener macht zal hebben om zulke kandidaten te Verordenen.

11. Dat het de plicht zal zijn van Zendings Overzieners om een Jaarlijkse Distrikt Konferentie te houden, de datum waarvan vast te stellen zijn in beraad met de Algemene Superintendent.

12. Dat de Distrikt Konferenties van Bedienaars en Plaatselijke Predikers macht zullen hebben om het verplaatsen van Bedienaars en Plaatselijke Predikers van een Gemeente naar een ander in hun distrikt aan te bevelen en dat de Zendings Overzieners verplaatsingen en ruil zodanig zullen regelen als raadzaam moge zijn in de beste belangen van het werk.

13. Dat de Naturelle Konferentie macht zal hebben de verplaatsing of ruil van een Zendings Overziener aan te bevelen en dat de Algemene Superintendent zulke verplaatsing en ruil zal uitvoeren als nodig of nuttig moge zijn.

14. Dat erkend werde dat de Zendings Overzieners steun in tijdelijke dingen nodig hebben van elke Gemeente in hun distrikt.

15. Dat het eerlijke pogen zal zijn van elke Bedienaar in de Zending om een onafhankelijke positie te bewaren ten einde zo min mogelijk ten laste van Gods volk te komen.

16. Dat elk lid onderwezen worden in zijn of haar verantwoordelijkheid om vrijgevig bij te dragen tot het werk des Heeren. Dat bovendien geregelde Oogstfeesten

jaarlik in elk middelpunt gehouden zullen worden.

17. Dat de Zedelings Overzieners voor ogen moeten houden om in hun distrikten een sterke macht rondgaande Evangelisten en Plaatselike Predikers te hebben die strijden zullen voor de uitbreiding van het werk.

18. Dat het in verband met voorgaande klausule het doel van elk Zedings Overziener zal zijn om een Bijbel opleidings school te hebben waar zulke Predikers onderricht in het woord zullen ontvangen en waarheen zij kunnen gaan voor nieuwe kracht.

19. Dat de Naturelle Konferentie goedkeurt het voorstel om een Centrale Opleidingschool te openen voor Bedienaars en Onderwijzers en het Zedings Komitee aanspoort om vroegtijdig stappen tot dat doel te nemen.

20. Dat de kleding van onze Naturelle Predikers zo eenvoudig mogelijk zal zijn. Dat ter wille van het Goevernement een Predikers boord en vest (onderbaatje) voldoende zal zijn. Dat het dragen van overkleden enz. afgekeurd wordt"

## APPENDIX 2: Opinion Poll - 1983

On the 18th of October 1983 an opinion poll was taken amongst the black pastors of the AFM in Africa at their annual Conference held in Mafikeng. Approximately 174 pastors answered the questionnaire. Because this opportunity arose unexpectedly, there was no time beforehand to test the questionnaire for efficiency and clarity. In the light of this each question was meticulously explained by the author to the audience.

### OPINION POLL - CONFERENCE 1983

1. Who Are You?
  - a) Pastor; Full-time Elder; Elder
  - b) Age \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) District in which you work: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Theological Training
  - a) Do you feel it is necessary to have theological training to do the Lord's work? Yes; No
  - b) Have you had any theological training yourself? Yes; No
  - c) If yes, was your training in the college or by correspondence? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Do you feel that the training was sufficient? Yes; No
  - e) If no, what subjects do you think should be added to the training? \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) Now that you are in the ministry, do you feel the need for further training? Yes; No
  - h) If yes, in what area or areas? \_\_\_\_\_



1) If you had to start your training all over again, what form of theological training would you prefer?

Full-time at a Bible College; Correspondence (In service)

### 3. Field Adviser

a) Do you feel that your Field Adviser understands your problems? Always; Sometimes; Never

b) Can he speak your language? Yes; No

c) Do you think he understands your culture? Yes; No; A little bit.

d) Do you feel that he really loves the black people? Yes; No; A little bit.

e) Do you think you can manage without him? Yes; No; Unsure

f) What do you think is the most important function of your Field Adviser at present in your district? (Mark in order of

importance from 1 - 6) \_\_\_\_\_Administrative; \_\_\_\_\_Training;

\_\_\_\_\_Fund raising for projects; \_\_\_\_\_Organising;

\_\_\_\_\_Evangelism; \_\_\_\_\_Building of churches.

g) What do you like least in your Field Adviser? \_\_\_\_\_

---

h) Do you feel that you understand him? Always; Sometimes; Never.

### 4. The Believer and Politics

a) Do you feel that to take an active part in politics is: Sin; Not sin; Do not know.

b) Mark what you feel is right: \_\_\_\_\_ To stand as candidate for a political party; \_\_\_\_\_ To vote; \_\_\_\_\_ Not to vote; \_\_\_\_\_ To have no part in politics.

5. The Black Church's Relationship with the White Church

- a) Do you feel that the Black Church must decide its own future? Yes; No; Unsure.
- b) How do you feel about Blacks and Whites worshipping together? Always right; Sometimes right; Never right.
- c) Do you feel that the Black Church must be a separate church, independent of the White Church? Yes; No; Unsure.
- d) Do you feel that the White Church treats the Black Church as a mature church? Yes; No; Unsure.

6. The AFM's Relationship with the Government

- a) Do you feel that the leaders of the White Church should be more outspoken about social matters, such as for example mixed gatherings and racial discrimination? Yes; No; Unsure.
- b) Do you feel that the leaders of the Black Church should be more outspoken about social matters such as for example, mixed gatherings and racial discrimination? Yes; No; Unsure.
- c) Do you feel that the leaders of the Black Church should have more contact with the Government by means of dialogue? Yes; No; Unsure.

**APPENDIX 3: Indigeneity scales - Ebbie Smith**

Questions related to each of the six categories of indigeneity.

**1. SELF-ADAPTING:**

- Are church activities carried out in the language most familiar?
- Is the music in the church adapted to the culture?
- Are services conducted in culturally appropriate ways?
- Do members remain in direct contact with their culture and friends?
- Is the membership mostly from one homogeneous group?

**2. SELF-SUPPORTING:**

- Does member-giving support all the church's budget needs?
- Does church fulfill all its financial obligations by member-giving?
- Does/did the church provide its own place of worship?
- Does the church maintain its own place of worship?
- Does the church give regularly for missionary and social causes?

**3. SELF-GIVING:**

- Does the church have a plan for social ministry?
- Does the church participate in government promoted programs?

- Does the church aid victims of disasters other than members?
- Does the church emphasize Christian citizenship?
- Does the church support denominational social ministries?

#### 4. SELF-DETERMINING:

- Are church decisions reached by patterns appropriate to the society?
- Are local congregations free from mission control?
- Are local congregations free from control of the central church organization?
- Does the church handle problems of discipline?
- Are members involved in the church decisions?

#### 5. SELF-FUNCTIONING:

- Can local members fill all positions of leadership in the church?
- Is there a program of leadership training for the church?
- Are laymen active in the service of the church?
- Do members assume responsibility for church problems?
- Does the church help members who suffer misfortune?

#### 6. SELF-PROPAGATING:

- Does the church have mission points or evangelistic posts?
- Has the church started a new mission or evangelistic point in the last two years?

- Has the church held a soul-winning course for members?
- Are mission points shepherded by members of the church?
- Did the church baptize one new member for each eight members last year?